



THE INDEPENDENT

WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 1996

WEATHER Dry and bright with patchy cloud 40p (IR 45p)

Blair walks tall into Europe

ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

Tony Blair yesterday went to Germany to pull off a breath-takingly bold political stroke on Europe, wearing his European colours with pride and defying the Tories to do their worst in smearing him as a man about to sell out Britain.

The Labour leader told his Bonn audience that he wanted to walk tall in Europe, not skulk on the sidelines, and in a bold speech directly took on Mr. Major's attempts to paint him as a "poodle" who would be "waived over" by the big, bad barons of Brussels.

He made his move from an increasing position of Labour strength and Government drift. The Westminster hotchpot starting to rumble with an early election.

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against his Bonn speech, with Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, the Government's arch-Europhile, telling BBC radio's *World at One* that Labour was selling Britain out to the Germans.

Mr Blair told the German equivalent of the CBI: "We will - and with pride - fight the election on a platform of ending this perpetual and negative isolationism and I should tell you that I think our opponents are miscalculating."

"I have no doubt at all that Britain's future lies in the EU and at the centre of its events, not on the sidelines."

"It is demeaning to my country, the traditions of ingenuity and vision and the margins of ingenuity along which the vision and ers. Britain should place as a leader

Tony calls for a new shared by few

but for the avoidance of doubt, he clarified the position that would be taken by a Labour Government.

"Relations based on our national interest, which demands that we are a leading player in Europe: succeeding in Europe, not failing; winning, not losing; walking tall in Europe, not skulking on the sidelines; constructive and engaged, not simply because the interests of Europe demand it, but above all because the interests of Britain demand it."

In spite of the fact that those words could have been written by Mr Heseltine before he returned to Government in 1990, the Deputy Prime Minister swung into the attack, saying: "It is utterly ludicrous for Tony Blair to go to Germany and say, 'All right, now we'll all be nice together, it'll all be one great love-in out there.'"

"He would get walked over by much tougher, harder people who know the reality of the nation states fighting for supremacy within Europe."

The Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, said: "He would turn this nation into a doormat upon which other countries could wipe their feet."

But Mr Blair's critics ignored the qualifications of his text. He said: "We will work closely with Germany and others to help make sure EMU is given the best chance of working."

However, as the man who could be chairing the British

presidency talks on Economic and Monetary Union next June, he also warned that precipitate action could do untold damage. Without sustainable economic convergence between single currency states, he said, there would be a risk to the weaker economies and to employment.

"The result could be a reaction amongst the people that could be severe, nationalist in tone and dangerous. That is not the policy of scepticism but of prudence. But it is not our purpose to derail the project."

Beef cult fear, p. 2

Terror alert, page 2

French and Germans oppose single currency

JOHN RENTON
Political Correspondent

The people of Germany, France and Britain are all opposed to a single European currency - in Britain's case by a huge 44-1 majority - if they are asked a question about the "hard" practicalities rather than the broad principle, according to a Harris poll for the *Independent*.

On British voters, 8 per cent agreed that "Britain should keep the pound", while only 18 per cent thought the pound should be replaced by the Euro, due to be launched in 1999.

This is the highest figure yet recorded for opposition to the single currency, because Harris specified in its question that "key decisions on interest rates and monetary policy" would be taken either by a European Central Bank or the British government.

Should there be a single European currency with key decisions on interest rates and monetary policy taken by a new European Central Bank?

	Belg	France	Ger	UK
Yes	40	43	29	18
No	50	55	70	78

The findings of the four-country poll suggest that the whole of Europe could be moving in a Euro-sceptical direction. Germans oppose a single currency by 80 to 19 per cent, and the normally pro-single-currency French are opposed by 79 to 19 per cent in these terms. Even the ultra-European Belgians are opposed by 59 to 29 per cent.

The poll comes as an all-party House of Lords committee warns of the dangers of Britain being left out of a single currency if Germany and France go ahead. The report of its six-

month inquiry, published today, says "it may be difficult to resist" pressures for informal trade discrimination against countries which do not join monetary union.

The *Independent's* poll also confirms that German public opinion is the real obstacle to a settlement of the dispute over British beef exports.

Two-thirds of German voters (67 per cent) believe their government rather than the European Union should decide when it is safe for British beef to be sold in Germany.

Opinion in France and Belgium is less hostile, with 51 per cent and 48 per cent of voters prepared to leave the decision to the EU.

Harris Research interviewed 516 people in Belgium, 1,032 in France, 410 in Germany and 1,025 in Great Britain this month.

Generals in Moscow coup attempt

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Russia's fastest rising politician, Alexander Lebed, yesterday claimed to have snuffed out an attempted military coup after the sacking of the Russian defence minister, Pavel Grachev.

General Lebed said that he intervened after a group of generals gathered outside Mr Grachev's office, and tried to persuade him to put the army under strict control in an effort to prevent Boris Yeltsin from the dismissal decision.

At a press conference yesterday, General Lebed compared the scheme to the failed coup of 1991, in which a group of hardline Communists tried to unseat Mikhail Gorbachev, accelerating the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. He later toned down his claims, saying it was merely an attempt to put pressure on Mr Yeltsin. But he repeated allegations of a thwarted coup on Russian television last night.

His remarks appear to have caused consternation in the Russian government - the Prime Minister, Viktor Cherno-

myrdin, said he knew nothing of General Lebed's accusation and described reports of a challenge to Mr Yeltsin as "stupid".

The general yesterday shot to the lofty heights of secretary of the policy-making security council and national security adviser after coming third in Sunday's first round of the presidential election with almost 15 per cent of the vote. His appointment to some of the most sought-after jobs in the Kremlin was a blatant effort by President Yeltsin to win over his voters in the election run-off.

The retired general, a moderate nationalist who campaigned on his ruthless attitude to law and order, accused five generals, together with the Georgian defence minister, of being at the offending meeting. Although details of the incident remained cloudy last night, General Lebed told NTV that he ordered the central command point at the army's general headquarters to place a block on forwarding any orders made by the sacked General Grachev, whom he has long regarded as an arch-enemy.

He said he went to the

Moscow district military headquarters to intercept the former minister's commands, and issued a telegram to all units telling them about his appointment and asking them to keep calm and continue with military exercises.

"I do not know the thrilling details of how it was planned to be," he said. "I just took my own measures." He said it was his duty as secretary of the security council to prevent "any conflicts which could be dangerous for the state".

Grachev fired, page 8
Leading article, page 11

Britain's future at the centre, not the sidelines

I want you to know that, however unfairly we believe we have been treated, I reject, and most British people reject unreservedly, the xenophobia and anti-German sentiment that this crisis has engendered in certain quarters.

I have no doubt at all that Britain's future lies in the EU, and at the centre of its events, not on the sidelines.

It is demeaning to my country, that is so rightly proud of its history and traditions, to be reduced to the margins of influence, dragged along querulously behind the vision and drive of others.

I intend to lead a new Labour government that will provide a fresh start in Britain's relations with Europe... which demands that we are a leading player in Europe; succeeding in Europe, not failing; winning

not losing; walking tall in Europe, not skulking on the sidelines; constructive and engaged, not simply because the interests of Europe demand it, but above all because the interests of Britain demand it.

We will fight the next election as the party in favour of a constructive relationship within Europe.

The Conservatives, whatever the true instincts of some of their leaders, will fight it trying to portray a new Labour government as selling out Britain to Europe. They will say that we want to end Britain's identity as a nation state in some United States of Europe, to abandon Britain's veto over all areas of policy.

Their claims are nonsense, and they know it. We will, with pride, fight the election on a platform of ending this perpetual and negative isolationism.

Excerpts from Tony Blair's speech to the BDI

QUICKLY

Greenwich's hour

The £500m Millennium Exhibition to mark the year 2000 will definitely take place at Greenwich in south London, it was announced last night. Page 5

Ulster alert

The RUC last night stepped up security measures in Northern Ireland in view of what it described as the uncertainty over the future activities of paramilitary groups, in particular the IRA. Page 2

Beatles popped

Oasis are now more popular with British record-buyers than even The Beatles, according to a new survey. Page 3

Gambon belittled

Michael Gambon has been refused permission to re-create a West End role on Broadway because the Americans do not consider him to be a big enough star. Page 20

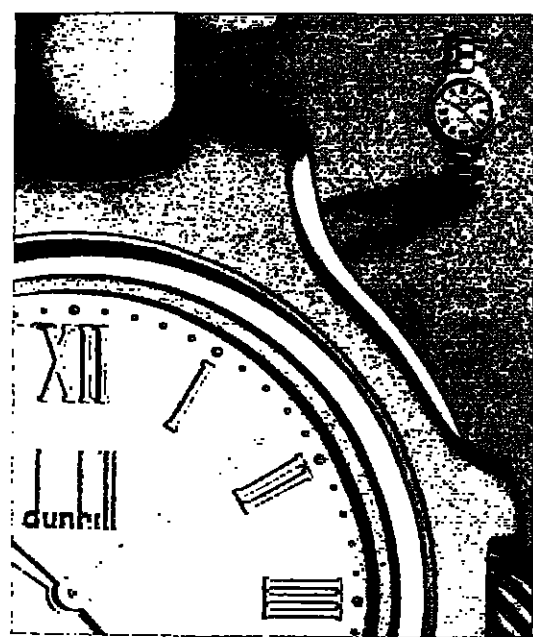
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Questions Adams must answer

DAVID McINTYRE
and ALAN MURDOCH

The Royal Ulster Constabulary last night stepped up security measures in Northern Ireland in view of what it described as uncertainty over the future activities of paramilitary groups, in particular the IRA.

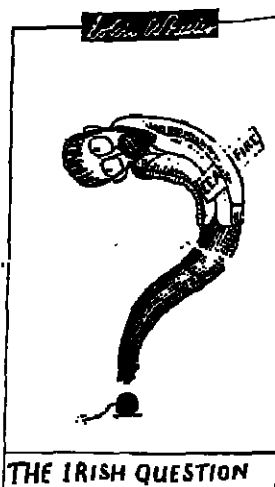
Road checkpoints were mounted in and around Belfast and other districts on a scale not seen since before the IRA ceasefire of August 1994. In a several provincial towns barricades which have of late been left open were locked.

The indications from security sources are that the measures are considered prudent in the wake of the IRA bomb attack on Manchester rather than being based on firm knowledge of the organisation's plans. Some

weeks ago barricades were locked in a number of towns, but this proved a false alarm.

Last night, a brief RUC statement said: "In view of the recent uncertainty over the intentions of paramilitary groups, especially on the republican front, it has been necessary to increase anti-terrorist precautions throughout the province."

The moves came as political pressure was maintained, in both London and Dublin, on Sinn Féin and its president, Gerry Adams, to dissociate themselves from IRA violence in the wake of the Manchester bombing and the killing of an Irish detective in Limerick. Yesterday the Irish government decided to keep open a line of communication to Sinn Féin, while making clear that its relations with



the republican party would be as arctic as possible without actually breaking off contact.

In doing so the Irish government reflected the unmistakable wave of public revision in the Republic against the recent violence. The cabinet decision was welcomed by the main opposition party, Fianna Fáil, which has a proprietorial attitude towards the peace process, but was attacked by the smaller Progressive Democrats.

Fianna Fáil's spokesman Ray Burke said it was important to encourage the Adams leadership towards fulfilling "a peace mandate," adding: "The only way forward is not to isolate, but to engage. We had for 25 years, but it was not developed." He said Sinn Féin "must get to the table but they must have a permanent peace to get to the table."

But Mary Harney, the Progressive Democrat leader, said:

"I'm very disappointed. Today was the day to be tough. Are we waiting for another bomb, or for more people to be killed? There has been too much encouragement, too much cajoling of Sinn Féin."

In the Commons John Major and Tony Blair united in putting pressure on Sinn Féin. The Prime Minister said it was a "moment of truth" for Gerry Adams. The Labour leader said the responsibility now lay with Sinn Féin to ensure the IRA ceased its violence.

In Dublin the Taoiseach, John Bruton, had earlier pressed for clear and convincing replies from Sinn Féin on whether it had "gone to the IRA to ask for a renewed ceasefire, and if not why not." Mr Adams told Irish radio that "the question of what the IRA can or should do

is something I am working on and will continue to work on." On support for the IRA he said: "Sinn Féin wants to see an end to the armed struggle. We are not involved in it. We do not advocate it."

Police co-ordinating the hunt for the Manchester bombers believe they now have enough information to issue full descriptions of those who planted the device, writes James Cusick.

Detectives have built up a picture of events and the people involved from numerous interviews including a taxi driver who unwittingly ferried £2,000 during the sale of the van which was used in the bombing, and from evidence gathered by video recordings in both Manchester and Cambridgeshire. Descriptions are likely to be issued today.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Postal workers' leaders raised the stakes yesterday in their dispute with Royal Mail, when they called a second 24-hour strike to follow this Friday's day-long stoppage. The postal executive of the Communication Workers' Union rejected a call for moderation by Alan Johnson, the general secretary, and opted for another walkout, next Friday. The executive decided that talks this week had not yielded enough concessions from management.

Richard Dykes, Royal Mail managing director, has warned that the offer on pay will be withdrawn if the action continues. The main stumbling block to a settlement is the Post Office's insistence on team-working which the union believes is simply a device to extract more work from employees without adequate compensation. *Barrie Clement*

The Broadcasting Bill, which allows greater cross-ownership of newspapers, television and radio companies, and sets up a framework for digital television, yesterday completed its committee stage in the Commons. The National Heritage Minister, Lord Sainsbury, said that the Bill would be introduced in the House of Lords next month, when he persuaded two MPs, John Whittingdale and David Shaw, to withdraw a new clause and allow the Bill to proceed. The Bill will return for its report stage, when the Government could be defeated over moves by Labour with some Tory support to break the exclusive rights by BSkyB television to sports programming. *Colin Brown*

Graduates should repay a proportion of their tuition fees to help meet the cost of higher education, Labour was told yesterday. Baroness Tessa Blackstone, a Labour foreign affairs spokeswoman in the Lords, told a London conference that students should pay back 20 per cent of their fees. The vice-chancellors' leader, Professor Gareth Roberts, said Labour would be unable to fund higher education properly unless it insisted on loans for a portion of tuition fees. To the dismay of some of its own supporters, Labour announced last month that it would abolish grants for living costs and offer students loans. *Judith Fidd*

The makers of Anadin Paracetamol won an "indefinite" High Court injunction yesterday, banning the Asda supermarket chain from selling the drug at below the legal minimum price. After a two-minute private hearing, Mr Justice Brian Smedley extended the temporary order granted last week to Whitehall Laboratories.

The case followed Asda's decision to cut the price of the tablets from £1.72 to 86p for 24 tablets, in contravention of Resale Price Maintenance (RPM) laws which set drug prices to ensure the survival of small pharmacies. The company has now taken Anadin Paracetamol off its shelves and is selling its own-brand paracetamol at 24p - 1p per tablet, compared with 7p for the Anadin brand. *Louise Jolly*

A court case centred on a tiny snail, which could delay construction of the £18m Newbury bypass, opened yesterday. A coalition of leading environmental groups is seeking a judicial review in the High Court over the way in which the Environment Agency is applying EU directives to a long-dwelling Desmoulin's whorl snail.

Two small snails, one of which is said to be the last of its kind, are being protected by the bypass. Government's decision to allow the bypass, while it was a small snail, still goes ahead, with a new, more snail-friendly, road.

A young man stalked a Hampshire woodland girl, armed rapist through a girlfriend. The terrified teenager had abducted his attacker, wearing a black and white coat and armed with a handgun and a long-bladed knife. Her boyfriend alerted police after he lost sight of the knife.

Officers arriving at Havant Forest spotted the 16-year-old girl and her attacker before he disappeared into the undergrowth. Armed officers were called to the forest and a police spotter plane and helicopter with thermal imaging equipment were called in.

Employees in the EU should choose to work in Germany for the most generous holiday entitlement. It is the pension contributions and Sweden for maternity leave, according to a report published yesterday. The findings are given in a guide to benefits and labour law by consultants, which funds most of its "Apart from those in Denmark, the UK make the benefits through taxation, employers in the UK just 8% of salary," said the report. "With the exception of Ireland, wherever you go in Europe you are likely to get longer holidays than you do in the UK."

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Beef crisis: Deal on lifting ban could bring higher death toll
EU demands could add 67,000 to cullCOLIN BROWN
and PAUL FIELD

Britain could be forced to cull an extra 67,000 cows to meet European demands for the eradication of BSE in the British herd, Douglas Hogg, the embattled Minister of Agriculture, told MPs yesterday.

Downing Street sources last night signalled that Britain may be prepared to go along with the demands in order to secure a deal on the framework plan for lifting the ban on British beef exports before the EU summit on Friday in Florence.

But Mr Hogg was warned by Tory members of the Agriculture Select Committee that he would face stiff resistance from MPs and farmers if he went ahead with the extended cull.

Britain has offered to cull up to 80,000 cattle to give assurances to its European partners, but Mr Hogg told the cross-party select committee that an additional cull of cattle born in 1989-90 was being demanded by EU ministers. That would mean raising the cull by an additional 67,000 cattle.

Reports yesterday suggested that the Government was prepared to consider European demands to slaughter another 20,000 cattle most at risk of developing BSE, provided a framework for lifting the beef ban is agreed. But Mr Hogg said: "I am very much aware that there would be considerable anxiety about a proposal for a compulsory cull in respect of the year 1989-90."

"I should say that the press reports to the effect that we have put that year on the table, which appeared today, are quite untrue. Though I'm bound to say I don't recognise the figure 20,000, if the cattle in the year 1989-90 were to be the subject of a compulsory cull - and that is not our proposal - the numbers are around 67,000."

Mr Hogg said there would be difficulty in extending the selective cull to the year 1989-90 because farmers had not been required to keep records then. He was warned by Richard Alexander, Tory MP for Newark, that culling an extra 20,000 cattle was "at the borders of acceptability". Edward Leigh, a Euro-sceptic Tory MP, said the cull of 30-month-old cattle contributed "not one jot" to the protection of human health.

Farmers said last night they would not accept an extension of the proposal for a selective

cattle cull which would mean an extra 67,000 dairy cows being slaughtered. They say they would rather see the export ban remain in force than take part in what they see as an unnecessary scheme with no scientific justification.

"We can see a scenario where we will refuse a selective cull and the export ban will continue," said Ian Gardiner, policy director of the National Farmers' Union. "It would concern us because exports are so important. But we are not going to destroy the livelihoods of thousands of dairy farmers just in order to resume beef exports."

The Government yesterday diluted its threat to disrupt the EU summit if no settlement is reached in advance, write John Lichfield and Sarah Helm.

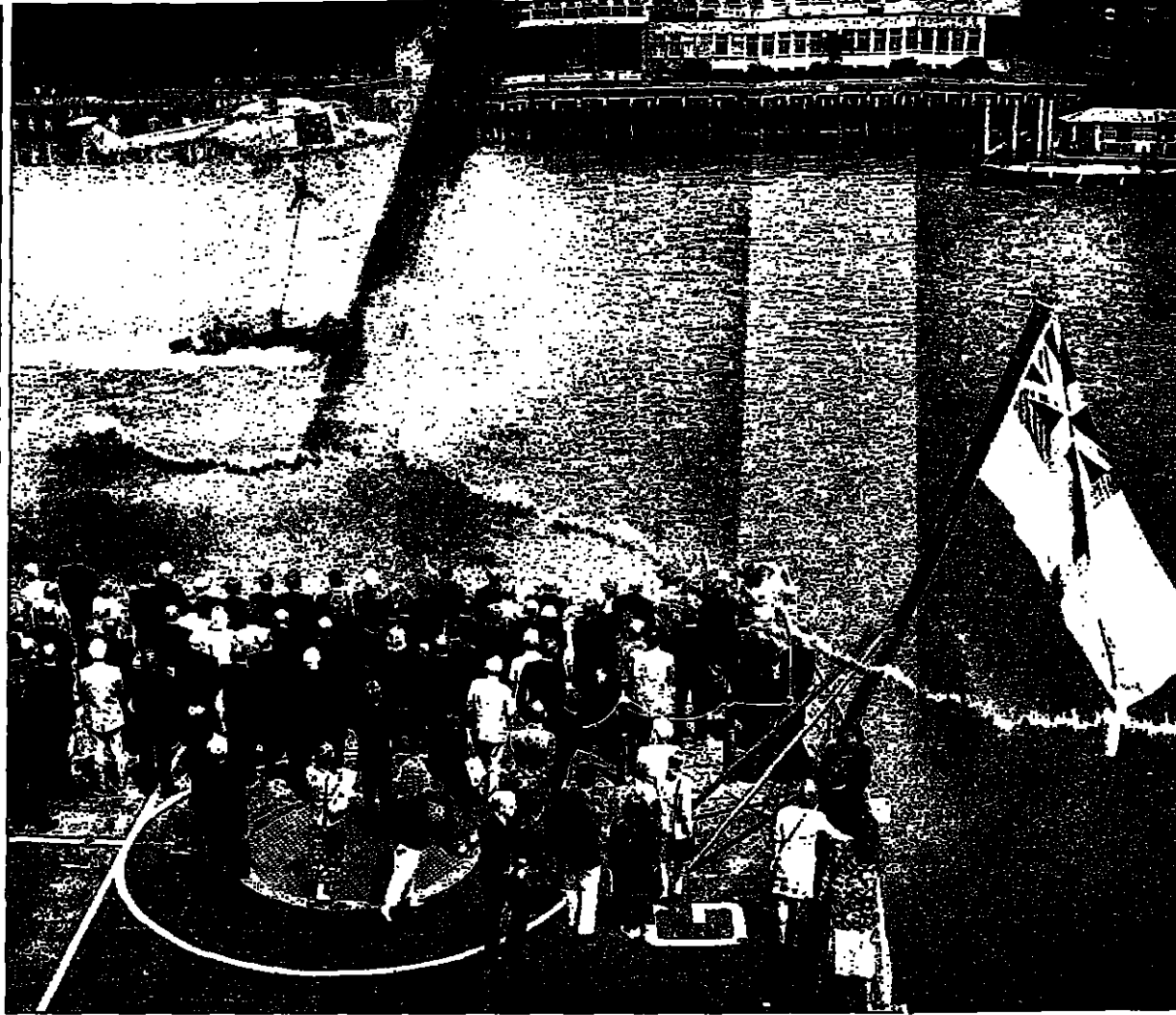
Officials said the Prime Minister would be ready to discuss other business so long as he was confident the beef dispute would be dealt with at some point.

The Italian government, which is chairing the summit, is expected to postpone full discussion of the worldwide export ban on British beef until heads of government meet for dinner at the end of the first day. UK officials said yesterday that they would not necessarily object to this timetable. The Prime Minister would participate in other summit discussions, if he was assured that a proper discussion of beef was on the agenda.

The comments can be seen as an attempt by the Government to pull back from outright confrontation. Without making some kind of historic exhibition, Mr Major cannot stop other EU leaders discussing whatever they want, but he could refuse to take part in other discussions or, when his turn came, repeat *ad nauseum* his arguments about beef. This option seems to have been discarded.

Meanwhile, the European Commission was last night locked in intense debate in Strasbourg about the shape of the framework proposal itself. Although the Commission is likely to support the British idea of lifting the ban in steps, important elements of the British draft framework were last night rejected by the Commission, while a series of tough new conditions were being proposed.

In a separate attempt to secure a reversal of the beef ban, Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, will today launch the first stage of a legal appeal at the European Court of Justice.



Navy day: Royal Marines showing their skills with a rope dropped from a Lynx helicopter on the River Thames in London yesterday for the preview of this year's Royal Tournament, in which the Navy is the lead service. Photo: David Rose

A rose by any other name would be as clichéd



DAVID AARONOVITCH

Yesterday was Princess Alexandra's Rose Day. Which I had never heard of before. This week is National Hospices Celebration Fortnight, and I must confess that I hadn't quite caught up with that either. But MPs knew all about them both, and a conservatory full of pink roses and large sunflowers decorated lobbies on both sides. When Harriet Harman took her place for Health questions, sans fleur, an aide (spotting that Secretary of State Dorrell was floribund) quickly passed Hattie a bloom to fix to her chest before the TV cameras came to rest upon her. No public relations advantage to either side and no disasters.

The dress battle over, soundbite war came next. This is where Labour charges the government with sin of the Week (current favourites include incompetence and high taxation) and the Tories respond in kind (hypocrisy, no policy). Dorrell's Bane, according to Harman was red tape, which was eating up quillions, leaving "children turned away from intensive care, patients waiting hours on trolleys" and thou-

sands of cancelled operations. As she reached the end of her lachrymose catalogue, tears did indeed prick the eyes of some of her more sensitive colleagues. Of shame, perhaps. The Tory benches were dancing to the tune of their own whips, but it was not always easy to discern what this was. One large, florid MP stood to the sound of cheers. It was James Hill, member for the Test division of Southampton and newly knighted in the Queen's birthday honours for "political services". He certainly did not get the old sword on the shoulder for his speech making. In an almost inaudible mutter he praised GP fund-holding because under it "every GP can run over fungus long before the

lop-eared rabbit". Ministers ignored the lepid distraction and delivered their pre-planned sound-bite, which was a Labour's lack of clear policy.

The third area of contest was a negative one - trying not to upset groups of voters unnecessarily. This manifested itself in Mr Dorrell's response to what can only be described as a hospital pass from that prolific questioner, John Marshall (Con, Hendon South). Mr Marshall was waxing indignant again (he will get his gong for services to indignation) about beef. Was the minister aware that the highest incidence of CJD was in Austria (not Germany, true, but close), which should be made clear to people whether they ate beef, or were - in Mr Marshall's words - "stupid vegans".

Vegans may be stupid, but Mr Dorrell is not. He knows that there is no law which obliges Britain's growing Vegan population to vote Labour. "The honourable member", he replied deftly, "expresses his own view about vegans - or a particular sub-group of them". The subgroup, remember, was stupid

vegans who, as Mr Dorrell had surmised, were those most likely - following Mr Marshall's intervention - to vote conservatively.

Finally there was the "good bloke" competition. Largely a feature of Prime Minister's Question Time this is where party leaders associate themselves with those (usually recently deceased) whom the public loves. Sir Michael Neuber (Con, Romford) invited Mr Major to reflect upon the life of Sir Fitzroy Maclean - soldier, explorer, spy, diplomat and author - who had just popped his clogs. Having searched his poetic soul for an appropriate response Mr Major came up with this: "Sir Fitzroy lived life to the full. He would regard that as a very satisfactory epitaph."

Nonsense. To have a life of extraordinary adventure summed up in one appalling cliché by a man who regards a return to Britain as an act of almost Fiennesian bravery, would not have been well regarded by Sir Fitzroy. But then, unlike stupid vegans, Sir Fitzroy will not be casting his vote at the next election.

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On the day that Oasis became more popular than The Beatles, these albums show how pop is breaking up

 <p>Black Grape <i>It's Great When You're Straight... Yeah!</i> (Radioactive)</p> <p>Most infectious dance-rock party album of last year, replete with blues harp, electric sitars and slide guitars, over which Shaun Ryder mutters enigmatic raps. All the swagger of vintage 1972 Stones.</p>	 <p>The Chemical Brothers <i>Exit Planet Dust</i> (Junior Boys' Own)</p> <p>Wielding synthesizers like rivet-guns, DJ remix duo The Chemical Brothers make the kind of dance music rock fans can enjoy too, a fearsome punk-funk techno-metal barrage.</p>	 <p>Everything But The Girl <i>Walking Wounded</i> (Warner Bros)</p> <p>This folk-jazz duo's intriguing blend of spring-loaded double-time rhythms of jungle music. Tracey Thorn's calmly focused delivery uses the dry, strangely impersonal rhythm tracks as a springboard.</p>	 <p>Mark Morrison <i>Return Of The Mack</i> (Eastwest)</p> <p>Leicester's own leather-clad lothario proved just as able with the seductive sounds of swingbeat and G-Funk as any of the American originators. Lots of sex and drugs, but mercifully free of violence.</p>	 <p>Oasis <i>(What's The Story) Morning Glory?</i> (Creation)</p> <p>Leavening the ringing guitar-rock of their debut with pensive ballads, Oasis pull out all the stops this time round. Throughout, it's Noel Gallagher's way with a tune - anybody's tune - which remains their trump card.</p>	 <p>Pulp <i>Different Class</i> (Island)</p> <p>Pop's favourite man of the people, Jarvis Cocker on top form, rendering the myriad discomforts of desire with unflinching but droll gaze, and cheerleading through the revenge-of-the-nerds singles "Common People" and "Mis-Shapes".</p>	 <p>Radiohead <i>The Bends</i> (Parlophone)</p> <p>Like U2 and Nirvana before them, Radiohead manage to articulate the most heartfelt, albeit disaffected in the most uplifting manner. Oxford's finest has a huge US following, despite barbed English cynicism.</p>	 <p>Super Furry Animals <i>Fuzzy Logic</i> (Creation)</p> <p>Part of the resurgent Welsh rock scene that also includes the Manic Street Preachers, Super Furry Animals make daff new music out of whimsical old styles, on songs about alien abduction, drug dealers and computer games.</p>	 <p>Tricky <i>Maxinquaye</i> (Island)</p> <p>Dark and hallucinatory, this is the keystone work of "trip-hop" music, in which the raps and sample collages of hip-hop are slowed down and stretched out to supply a languid menace that evokes the angry torpor of black disaffection.</p>	 <p>Various Artists <i>Routes Out Of The Jungle</i> (Virgin)</p> <p>In jungle music, the programmed snare-drum rattles along at twice the speed of the bass, a sonic relationship affording an unusual variety of approaches. This compilation covers the lot.</p>
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From indie labels via big business to fame

ANDY GILL

So, it's official: Oasis are, apparently, more popular than the Beatles - and presumably, by extension, even more popular than Jesus.

According to a survey in *Music Week*, the Gallagher brothers are now more widely loved by all sectors of the British record-buying public, beating the Fab Four into second place in the All-Time Favourite Top Ten. Of course, it's only a poll, and thus best taken with a pinch of salt, but still, there it is, in black and white: more popular than the Beatles.

Even those who spend their days caressed by the light-orchestral balm of Classic FM, find endless fascination in the slow trickle of talk on Radio 4 or turn to old Motown compilations and that worn-out copy of Dire Straits' *Brothers In Arms*, give Oasis the vote.

The *Music Week* survey has the Gallagher brothers not only clear favourites among the under-25s, but second favourites (after The Beatles) among the 25- to 45-year-olds, too.

Ironically, it is the very fragmentation of pop during the 1980s which led many to give up on it (remember all those New Romantics floundering around in mummy's clothing or obscure rap music) that is responsible for the current popularity of Oasis.

During that decade, the music business became more a case of business than music, with the major multi-national corporations seeking to increase their market share by absorbing smaller labels like Virgin and Chrysalis, often at absurdly inflated valuations. By 1994, six huge companies - Sony, Thorn EMI, Time Warner, Bertelsmann Music Group, Polygram and MCA Matsushita - con-

For those who have lost the script since the Fab Four, an exploration of the music that makes the charts, and 10 albums which define the current trends

ly to sit at number one for months on end, and a much faster turnover of hit product in areas previously viewed as marginal, such as rap and rave music.

Ultimately, the mainstream, as signified by the old Radio One/Top Of The Pops consensus, all but dissolved a couple of years ago, leaving a plethora of sub-genres - rap, indie, metal, swingbeat, jungle, Brit-pop, and any number of house/techno variations - forming a tapestry of styles and textures.

Accordingly, the BBC's coverage was forced to change course to reflect the new breadth of popular music - controversially at first, when Radio One started to lose listeners at an alarming rate, though it's undeniable that, like the charts, it now reflects more accurately the genuine spread of musical tastes in Britain, with individual shows servicing the needs of rap, indie and techno fans, and a broader, all-encompassing playlist.

For many older listeners, though, this was the end of the road: they simply couldn't keep up with the dizzying variety of modern pop, and settled instead on the comforting familiarity of the "Gold" stations' bland Sixties-oriented programming.

For some, it is a path of no return. But for many others, the old baby-boomer allegiances still linger, not least an affinity for guitars, harmonies and memorable tunes, which is why Oasis are so immensely popular even amongst mums and dads. With songs drawing freely on former pop glories, they're simply the easiest straw to clutch at, the most innumerable option available in the great wide, baffling world of modern British pop.

trolled the worldwide distribution and marketing of virtually all pop music.

The immediate effect was the imposition of cost-cutting corporate strategies on a business which traditionally operates by instinct. The result was that the in-house talent-spotters - the A&R men - lost out to the accountants. As a counterbalance, the independent sector which sprang up during the punk boom of the late Seventies took over most of the talent-spotting duties: all the big acts of the last ten years, from REM to Nirvana, and Pulp to Oasis, cut their teeth on small indie labels before being swallowed up by the multi-nationals - either directly, like REM, or through their label being acquired, like Oasis.

This fragmentation of the marketplace led to mainstream pop acts experiencing a shorter shelf-life than before, and the fringes becoming a feverish blur of activity. At the same time, the computerisation of sales returns from record shops means that the charts are less open to hype. They now reflect more accurately the true state of sales, with albums less like-



Rock of ages: Oasis have won the right to stand alongside The Beatles as all-time greats of pop. Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

A question of black and white influences

Are Oasis the new Beatles? Some would say Blur's more baroque, vaudevillean arrangements are more closely reflective of the late-period Beatles style, but there's no denying that when it comes to writing brilliantly simple pop songs, Noel Gallagher has Da-

mon Albarn beaten hands down every time, writes Andy Gill.

Like John and Paul, Noel knows the worth of a good hook, though he doesn't have anything like their reserves of originality and inspiration, preferring to plunder his hooks from pop's memory-banks.

when we respond to an Oasis song, we're usually responding at least in part to our memory of the original song which inspired it, which was never the case with the Beatles.

There's also the vexed question of influences: The Beatles were primarily influenced by black music, cover versions of which helped bulk out their first few albums; indeed, it was their "whiteening" of black music which proved such a revolutionary breakthrough in the Sixties, opening the door for such as the Stones and Yardbirds. Oasis, by comparison, have no discernible black influence, which may account for their rather statuesque stage performances - they prefer the likes of Paul Weller and The Stone Roses, secondhand influences whose own grasp of black music traditions is, to put it mildly, heavily filtered.

New boom in cable repeats threatened by Equity vote

MATHEW HORSMAN
MEDIA EDITOR

A controversial new pay deal could open the fledgling cable and satellite markets to a tidal wave of vintage BBC and ITV repeats, depending on the outcome of a postal ballot being conducted among members of Actors Equity this week.

For the first time, favourites such as Howard's Way or Thacker could find their way onto subscription channels, providing extra revenue for the BBC and ITV and generating fresh funds for members of the closed-shop union of actors.

But vocal opposition by a handful of Equity board members could swing sentiment against the deal, according to union insiders. Character actress Miriam Margolyes last week resigned over the issue. Four other board members, including Tony Booth, star of "TI

Death Do Us Part" voted against recommending the contract to members, compared to 27 in favour.

If approved, the deal will give starring actors 17 per cent of gross income from any programme sale, rather than the traditional "residual payment" - a fixed percentage of their original remuneration - which will continue to be used for repeats on terrestrial TV. Each actor's share of the gross income would be proportional to their original fee, with the minimum set at £50.

According to both the BBC and ITV, the residual model has made it nearly impossible to sell programming to secondary markets at an economic rate. "The residual can sometimes be more than the market price for programmes sold to cable and satellite," said a BBC insider. This is particularly true of programmes featuring a large cast.

If all actors receive a fixed percentage of their original remuneration, the total can "far exceed what the programme rights are worth in the secondary market," James Lancaster, rights negotiator at BBC Worldwide, the BBC's commercial arm, said.

The BBC has already had trouble making money on its UK Gold service, which features repeats from the BBC and Thames libraries, despite the channel's commercial success.

The BBC said last night: "The current situation makes programme sales to UK cable and satellite channels uneconomic. There is no doubt that a vote for royalty payments is in the best interests of Equity members, UK viewers and British broadcasters."

Ms Margolyes and her colleagues accuse Equity of abandoning the best interests of its members. They claim that rejecting the residual arrangements will reduce the amounts artists receive from the secondary market in the future, and puts at risk the system that protects artists from exploitation.


"Some of our members look back and say: 'wasn't it nice when we had just four channels, and we knew where we stood and what we would receive,'" a spokesman for Equity said. "But this is a forward-looking deal. We should not be in the business of preventing the work of our members from being broadcast widely on cable and satellite."

The result of nearly two years' negotiation, the deal is similar to the arrangements already used by the BBC in its overseas markets, which generate about £17m a year for Equity members. The results of the ballot should be announced on 16 July. Gambia's Broadway ban, arts news, page 20

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Bleak outlook: Commission for Racial Equality reveals how conflict in the classroom leads to a life of crime and alienation

Tough lessons for young blacks

HEATHER MILLS AND
REBECCA FOWLER

Yesterday, Brixton looked at its best. The sun shone, multi-cultural murals glistened on the walls, children played on the swings and even a traffic warden smiled as he pounded his volatile beat.

Days like this are to be cherished, for many of the area's young black people feel Brixton's image casts a cloud over them — a bleak picture of schools running out of control and friends being drawn into a life of crime. At best, it is difficult for them to share anything other than mixed feelings for their south London home.

Kelly O'Laya, 18, is lucky enough to have completed her A-levels and sums up the mood of despair that prevails. "I can see all these kids around and I

know they should be at school. That's maybe when they choose to go down a different path, like crime. It's just not something I chose, because I suppose I was scared of getting caught. But people's attitude is unfair, there are as many people round here doing good things."

The Commission for Racial Equality says Brixton is merely a microcosm — warning yesterday that Britain's black youth face alienation as they are driven towards crime and anti-social behaviour.

Figures show that Afro-Caribbean children are four or five times more likely to be thrown out of school than their white counterparts and unemployment among the young in some ethnic minorities runs three times higher. Herman Ouseley, the CRE chairman, said that school expulsions, in particular, "were forcing children onto the streets into conflict with the police."

Mr Ouseley said it was the sense of alienation which triggered "skirmishes" in parts of the country last summer. "Bradford and Brixton came close to giving us a glimpse of the social unrest none of us wants. It is time to recognise the need to invest in young people ... so that they can reach their full potential, rather than finance their custodial arrangements in later life."

More positively, the CRE's annual report for 1995 revealed that the number of reported racial discrimination complaints

had fallen from 1,937 in 1994 to 1,682 last year. Also, the contribution made by ethnic minorities was gradually being recognised by an increase in the numbers employed in many fields.

"We are able to draw some comfort from the knowledge that race relations in Britain during 1995 were as good if not better than anywhere else in Europe," said Mr Ouseley. But while ethnic minorities wanted to be treated equally and fairly, he properly educated and given jobs on merit, this was still not the experience of many.

In Brixton, they could only echo Mr Ouseley's sentiments. Many former pupils claim the schools have been sinking for some time, leaving those left without qualifications to face a desperate struggle for work.

Peter Johnson, 29, an unemployed decorator said: "They just get the second-rate teachers who have been rejected from the good schools and then sent to the ghettoes. The kids get no discipline, and instead of trying to teach them, they just enrol them. Then you're heading for disaster."

Youth worker Lee Parker agreed: "As soon as you take them out of the education system at an early age the only alternative is crime, and petty criminals become hardened criminals. This is a wake-up call for the Government to do something about our kids, and for schools to start taking the problem seriously."

Father accused of killing three infant children

A father killed his three babies by strangling and smothering them, a court was told yesterday.

Over a five-year period, Simon Smith's apparently healthy children — daughters Lauren, three months, and Eleisha, 10 months, and his six-month-old son Jamie — died suddenly. Stafford Crown Court was told. On each occasion he had spent time alone with them before finding them dead, it was alleged.

The deaths of Eleisha, in December 1989, and Jamie in April 1993, were put down to sudden infant death syndrome, or cot death. It was only after the examination in November 1994 into Lauren's death, which showed she died from asphyxia, that Mr Smith, 26, was arrested. He denies three charges of murder but in police interviews he admitted suffocating Lauren until she died, the court was told.

John Goldring QC, for the prosecution, described how Eleisha had been taken to Stafford District General hospital the week before her death after she had apparently suddenly stopped breathing, but nothing amiss could be found.

The following week she again collapsed during the night at the house in Stafford, which Smith shared with the child's mother, Tracy Hall. Smith had been the last person to see her, changing her nappy to stop her crying. The following morning he found her dead in her bedroom. A post mortem examination

into Eleisha's death concluded it was a case of sudden infant death syndrome.

In September 1992, Ms Hall had a second child, Jamie, again by Mr Smith. Jamie was found dead in his bed the following April. Two days before a health visitor had found him in perfectly good health.

On the night of the death the couple's next door neighbour had been baby-sitting and put Jamie to bed in his own home shortly before Jan. Soon afterwards, Mr Smith returned home, drunk after a party. Again he was the last person to see the child alive. Minutes after coming home Mr Smith knocked hysterically on a neighbour's door with Jamie's dead body in his hands. "Why me? Why me? I tried everything I could," he shouted. Again a post mortem examination found a case of cot death.

In July 1994, the third child, Lauren, was born. Her mother was Rachel Playfair. When Lauren was just three months old Mr Smith spent a day in Stafford shopping with her. Minutes after he returned home he claims he found the child dead on a sofa. Again she had apparently stopped breathing.

But after first denying the killing he later admitted to police he had smothered the child in the back seat of his car to stop her crying. This time a post mortem examination found the cause of death was asphyxia, the court was told.

The trial resumes today.

Hospitals braced for 'toughest year'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Waiting times are likely to lengthen and new developments face postponement as the NHS faces its toughest year financially since the NHS reforms came in, health authorities and trusts warned yesterday.

A survey undertaken by the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts (Nahat) shows that at least a quarter of trusts will only break even by cutting services and increasing waiting times for non-urgent admissions. At least one in five reckon they are unlikely to break even, and many report that rising demand for emergency services is eating into funds for waiting-list procedures.

"Generally acute trusts report that the rise in emergency admissions will have an effect on elective services, so that in-patient waiting times will either begin to increase or that planned reductions will not be achieved,"

the survey of 50 health authorities and trusts shows. One trust has calculated that for some conditions waiting times will escalate from 10 to 18 months.

Measures which could ease the pressures — for example merging duplicate services — are being held up by political sensitivity in the run-up to the general election, authorities report.

"It is no secret that this is the toughest year financially since the NHS reforms came in," Philip Hunt, director of Nahat said. "We have 1.1 per cent real growth and that isn't enough. Ideally, we need 3 per cent and we can manage on 2 per cent, but 1.1 per cent is real trouble."

The picture will vary locally, Nahat believes, and some developments in services will still take place. But "very difficult choices are having to be made", Mr Hunt said. "Whilst waiting times will fall or remain on an even keel in many places, in some parts of the country they are threatening to slip back."

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are not allowed to
indulge in all manner
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Shephard to bring in English grammar test for 14-year-olds

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

A new grammar test for 14-year-olds was announced by Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, yesterday as she continued her campaign to placate the Conservative right-wingers.

The review of English tests, which will anger teachers, comes after research from Southampton University showed that pupils were learning more grammar in foreign language lessons than in English lessons.

Labour yesterday accused Mrs Shephard of making the announcement to try to divert attention from the defeat in the House of Lords late on Monday of plans for a nation-wide nursery voucher scheme.

Mrs Shephard had accepted recommendations from government exam advisers that 14-year-olds, who must all take national tests in English, maths and science, should face an additional exam in grammar, spelling and punctuation.

At present, English consists of two papers, a comprehension and essay and a Shakespeare

test. English teachers have campaigned against the Shakespeare paper, maintaining that Shakespeare should be tested by coursework done in class and not by a timed written test.

Observers believe Mrs Shephard's decision on grammar may be a concession to right-wingers to pave the way for an announcement later this year that Shakespeare will be tested differently. Coursework assessment of Shakespeare is at present being trialled. However, the Prime Minister, who insisted that GCSE coursework should be cut back, has so far

Mistakes made by pupils

Some of the most common grammatical errors are:

She come to my house
I was soared so I run away
We was going to the shops
I threw it out the window
The government think they can do what they like
I would of done it if I could of
Getting off of the bus
Blood is thicker than water

Among the most common misspellings are:

Definitely
Seperate
Miscellaneous
Accommodation
Caribbean
Paraffin
Comittee
Equally
Liesure
Orchestra

resisted attempts to test Shakespeare in such a way.

The new test, which could be

in the form of an unstructured piece of prose into which pupils had to insert grammar, spelling

and punctuation, could not be introduced until the year after next but the weight given to spelling, punctuation and grammar could be increased from next year.

Mrs Shephard said she was asking the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority to review English tests "to ensure that they reflect the emphasis that the curriculum puts on correct English". She added: "If children are to learn to express themselves clearly and effectively and make full use of our wonderful language, they need to be taught how the English

language works. This may seem a remarkably obvious message but it is one that sadly was lost by the trendy teaching of the Sixties and Seventies."

Anne Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said that English teachers would be furious if such a test were introduced. The teachers argue that grammar should be tested through writing, and not through a separate test.

The Southampton report found that English teachers tended to concentrate on increasing pupils' creativity and

teaching them about writing styles while foreign language teachers taught grammar in a more formal way.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said: "Gillian Shephard is clearly beleaguered on all sides. Her announcement today comes several weeks after I made a similar back-to-basics speech and it is surely no coincidence that it comes on the day when the Lords have decided that a pilot scheme for nursery vouchers should properly be evaluated before it becomes a national scheme."

Vouchers plan, page 6

Cash secure for 2000 exhibition at Greenwich

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

The planned Millennium Exhibition to mark the start of the 21st century will definitely take place at Greenwich in south-east London, it was announced last night. After months of doubt and controversy about the funding of the £500m exhibition, Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, announced that the event's future was assured.

"The exhibition at Greenwich will go ahead and the country can look forward to a celebration of which it can be very proud indeed," she said yesterday. "On the basis of the substantial support received from the private sector, we are happy for work on the exhibition at Greenwich to continue."

Mrs Bottomley, who is chairman of the Millennium Commission, which met yesterday afternoon, would not reveal how much money had been received in sponsorship.

Sir Peter Levene, the businessman and government adviser, told the Millennium Commission that he was now confident of securing enough private-sector backing for the

event. After weeks of behind-the-scenes arm twisting in Whitehall, companies have been persuaded to drop their initial reluctance and offer support.

While the target figure of £144m had still to be met, Sir Peter told the commission he felt confident it would come once work on the site had started.

Sponsors had been invited to take a pavilion for £12m each. So far, only British Airways, British Telecom and the City of London Corporation have publicly pledged their support. Others thought to be interested include GEC, British Aerospace, Amec, BAA and London Electricity.

Sir Peter's report to the commission followed a recent emergency meeting between Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and captains of industry called after business reluctance became apparent.

Under the original scheme, the commission would put up £200m from National Lottery receipts, the private sector would find £144m, and gate receipts and licensing deals would account for the remaining £156m.

Without sufficient private backing, ministers were contemplating scaling down the event or scrapping it. At the

meeting, Mr Heseltine is alleged to have emphasised that backing for the exhibition should be seen not as a commercial decision but as an act of faith.

MPs for Birmingham, which lost out to Greenwich, have reacted furiously to claims that some of those at the meeting may have gone away believing they would receive peerages in return for their cash. In an early day motion tabled in the Commons yesterday, Labour MPs Ken Purchase (Wolverhampton North-East) and John Spellar (Warley West) called on the Government to ensure it was made clear that awards of peerages were "the sole prerogative of the Queen".

Mr Spellar said: "Mr Heseltine should make very clear where he stands on this. If he didn't mean to give that impression at the meeting, then he should make it clear."

He warned companies to think twice before committing cash to Greenwich: "A company that trades on a national basis, like BT, should be thinking very carefully about whether it should be backing Birmingham in the back to hell out a bid which is obviously not viable."

Mr Heseltine declined to comment on the allegation.

Overseas lottery aid 'too low'

REBECCA FOWLER

The £25m given by the National Lottery Charities Board to overseas projects has been criticised as being too low by British aid groups working in the Third World.

Charities, including the Red Cross, Oxfam and Action Aid, are concerned that the figure is only a fraction of the board's overall £2bn budget and does not reflect the public's commitment to overseas charitable work - which attracts 15 per cent of all donations.

However, the board which came under fire from the Prime Minister last week for supporting charities that work with gays, lesbians and prostitutes, defended the amount yesterday and denied it should be doubled.

Tessa Baring, a board member, said: "£25m will not solve the world's problems, but if we ensure it is used effectively to tackle long term solutions we believe it can make a considerable impact."

The money, which will be distributed among long-term projects in Asia, Africa, South and Central America and the Caribbean, may be revised next year, according to the board.

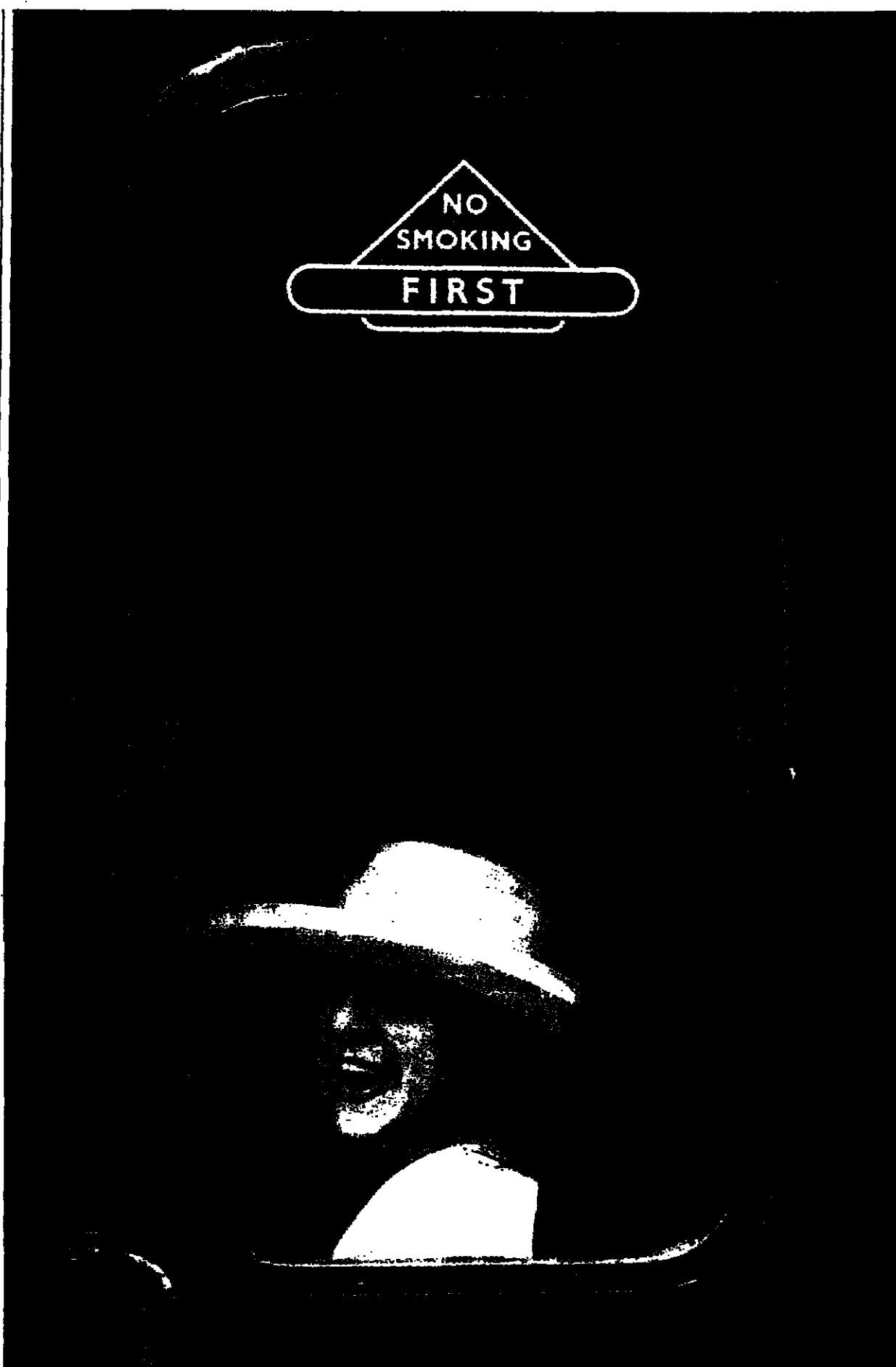
But Anna Feuchtwang, of Oxfam, said: "They've got a difficult balancing act, but whatever way you look at it, it's a very small amount. It should reflect public support for overseas aid." The charities defended the decision to send lottery money overseas against criticisms that it should be concentrated in Britain. It will benefit longer

term projects, such as disaster relief campaigns, which do not traditionally attract public donations.

Dominic Byrne, for Action Aid, said: "We believe the board should have announced a grant programme of at least £50m in line with public support."

Following criticisms of the allocation of grants, Tim Hornsby, the board's chief executive, will send a full report to the Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, this week, explaining how decisions were taken to fund a total of nine projects which included work with prostitutes, gay men and lesbians and deportees.

Mr Hornsby said: "We try to assess grants successfully, as we are legally obliged to do, and choose on merit."



Dressed for the races: Setting off from Waterloo station in London for Royal Ascot yesterday, on the opening of the four-day meeting at the Berkshire racecourse Ascot reports, pages 10 and 11. Photograph: Brian Harris

Sex-swap woman jailed for Harrods threat

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

A transsexual who threatened to plague Harrods with mice and fleas in a £5m blackmail plot was jailed for eight years yesterday.

Lydie Banot, 41, said she would release the rodents in the store's famous food hall, spread poison in its restaurants and place fleas in the clothes department, unless she was paid millions of pounds.

She had formed a grudge against the Knightsbridge store after receiving electrolysis treatment to remove facial hair at the store which she claimed left her face scarred. The Old Bailey was told. She was said to have become embittered after the initial failure of a sex-change operation in 1993.

The court was told that Banot - born Mario Kerr - began her blackmail attempt in November last year by sending a note to Harrods' owner, Mohamed al-Fayed, asking for £5m to be placed in a Swiss bank account. It was followed by two further demands for £2m each.

The police, who were brought in to run an undercover operation, at first thought they were dealing with a sophisticated blackmail campaign. A series of telephone calls and meetings were set up after she claimed she was being used as a go-between for an underworld team made up of former police officers, Customs and Excise officers and former soldiers who were blackmailing stores across the country. During negotiations, Banot reduced her demand for £5m to £50,000.

The plot was foiled and Banot arrested after a friend, Richard Killen, 47, told the security officer that she was acting on her own. Mr Killen was later charged with two offences of blackmail but these were dropped in court yesterday.

Banot, of Walthamstow, east London, pleaded guilty to three charges of blackmail.

Stuart Barnes, for the defence, said the blackmail attempt had been "a cry for help". She was suffering from a rare condition called gender identity disorder and had no intention of carrying out the threats.

Passing sentence, Judge Charles Forrester said: "You made a sustained and sophisticated attempt to obtain money from Harrods."

"It must not be forgotten that Harrods was not to know who was behind this."

After the case, Mr Killen, of Finsbury Park, north London, said: "This woman needs help not punishment. When I knew what was going on, I contacted Harrods and told them there was no plot and she had mental problems. For my trouble, I was thrown in prison for eight weeks and missed Christmas with my children."

Countryside 'under threat from advertising clutter'

WILL BENNETT

For decades the British countryside has had a more tranquil air than the rural areas of France or the United States. But conservation groups say that Government proposals to relax controls on advertising are about to change that.

After crossing the Channel the difference is immediately

apparent. French roadsides are lined with advertisements for drinks, cars, tyres and in recent years the hypermarkets so beloved by the British.

In the US, main routes across the heart of the continent are disfigured by billboards proclaiming the virtues of Coca Cola, Marlboro, and the like.

Until now more than half of Britain has been protected from

such visual intrusion by being declared "Areas of Special Control of Advertisements" where poster hoardings are banned and other advertisements are strictly regulated. The Government is now planning to relax these controls by abolishing the special areas and allowing potential advertisers to apply to local authorities for permission to erect hoardings.

The move has enraged conservation organisations such as the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW), which have written to the Government urging it to drop the proposals.

Neil Sinden, national planning campaigner for CPRE, said that the present controls are "one of the great achieve-

ments of post-war planning". He added: "The Government's proposals reveal an astonishing disregard for the great public support for strict control over advertising. One of CPRE's earliest successes was the removal of unsightly advertisements in rural areas. We believe it opens the door to the piecemeal introduction of advertising. The proposals are the thin

end of the wedge and it is sending out the wrong signals about poster hoardings being all right in rural areas."

Mervyn Williams, director of CPRE, said: "In the relatively small-scale landscapes that characterise rural Wales any intrusion has a serious impact. The uncluttered appearance of rural areas is a crucial component of people's enjoyment of

the qualities that make the countryside so special."

A spokesman for the Department of the Environment said: "The present extra controls are largely obsolete and alternative controls are available to local authorities. The proposals will not result in a proliferation of posters in the countryside because local authorities have sufficient powers to prevent this."

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politics

Vouchers plan: Buoyed by Lords defeat Blunkett threatens to enlist support of dissident Tories for alternative scheme

Shepherd: 4-year-old pupils to get places

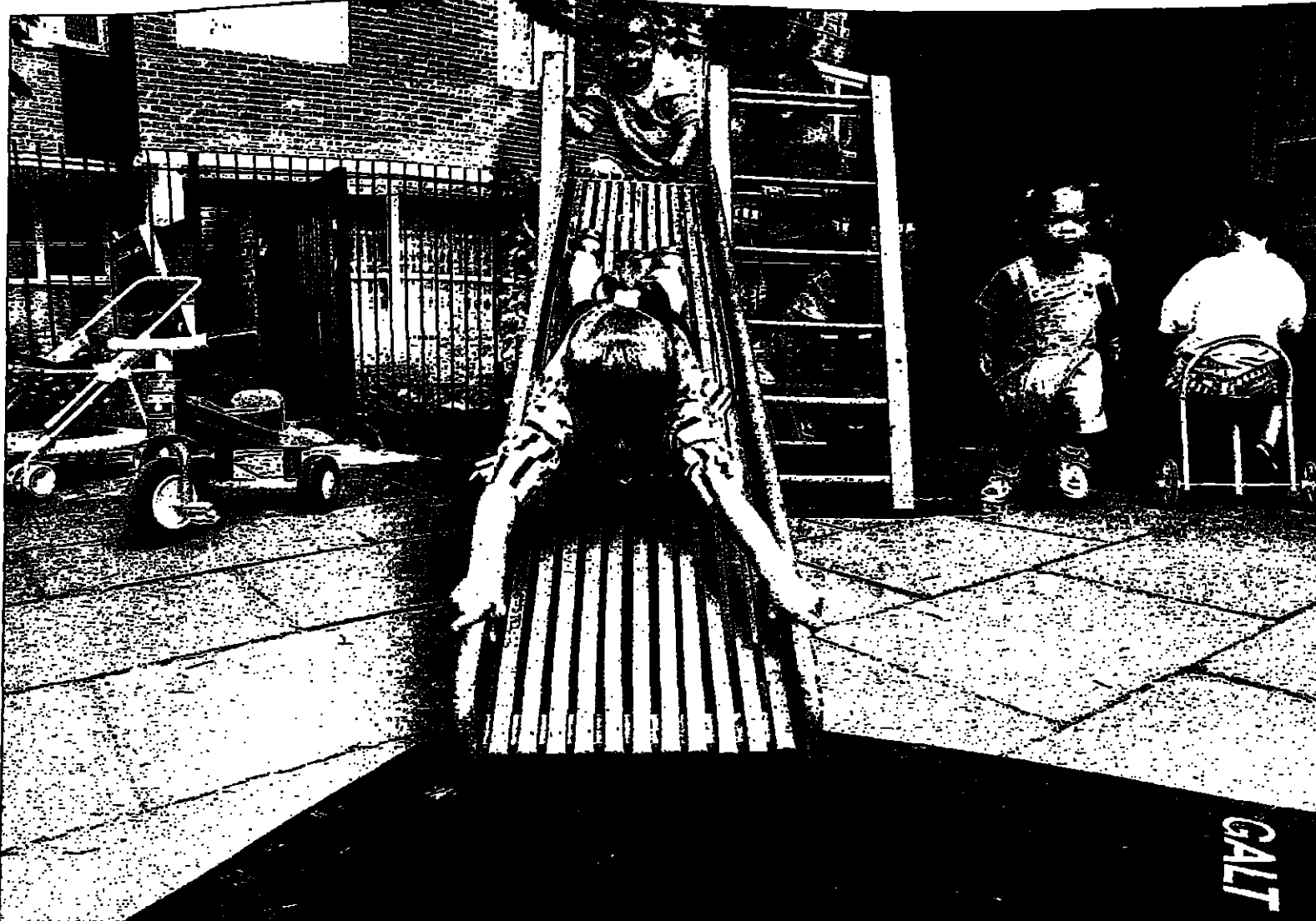
FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

The introduction of nursery vouchers will not be derailed by a defeat in the House of Lords, ministers said yesterday. Gillian Shepherd, Secretary of State for Education, promised to provide places for all four-year-olds next year despite calls for a delay from the Upper House.

Meanwhile, Labour sought to capitalise on the Government's embarrassment over the issue by calling for all-party support for an alternative scheme and offering to put aside party considerations to find a solution. David Blunkett, the party's education spokesman, warned that if Mrs Shepherd did not agree to co-operate with Labour it would do its best to rally Tory dissidents to defeat the Government over the issue.

On Monday night peers voted to delay the national implementation of the scheme until the results of a year's pilot exercise in four authorities are known. In effect, the Labour amendment could mean the collapse of plans for £1,100 vouchers for the parents of all four-year-olds. The scheme is due to be brought in nationwide in April 1997 and any postponement would almost certainly delay it until after the general election.

Yesterday, Mrs Shepherd said the Government intended to stick to its original timetable, suggesting that it will try to overturn the Lords' decision when the vouchers Bill returns to the Commons. "While we naturally take careful note of their Lordships' views... the scheme is firmly set on course for nationwide implementation. Delaying its introduction would prevent over half a million children and their parents from enjoying the benefits of a whole year's schooling," she said.



Learning curve: Ministers have promised to press ahead with plans to provide nursery places for all four year-olds

Photograph: Edward Sykes

He added that dissident Tories who had already lost favour with the Government over other issues might join with Labour to defeat the voucher scheme. Some Conservative areas, such as Solihull, have

protested that the plans would have a detrimental effect on already generous local nursery provision. A pilot scheme in Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Norfolk has shown that many of the

children whose parents have received vouchers end up in the reception classes of nursery schools. Extra places had to be provided to meet the demand created by the programme.

While opposition politicians hailed the Lords' decision as a victory for common sense, some under-five groups were disappointed. Margaret Lochrie, chief executive of the Pre-School Learning Alliance, which oversees play groups, said it helped

parents on low incomes. "The voucher scheme is not perfect. However, for the first time funding will be available... for all types of provision, and this is already long overdue," she said. Commentary, page 13

Labour pledges facts and figures clean-up

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Labour would set up an independent arm's-length National Statistical Service to restore public faith in official statistics, Jack Straw, the party's home affairs spokesman, said yesterday. The new body would operate on a similar basis to the National Audit Office, reporting to a committee of the House of Commons. Its head would be appointed jointly by the Prime Minister and the chairman of the committee, Mr Straw said.

"We have to have facts which the public can trust," he told a London conference organised by the think-tank Demos. "Democratic debate is disabled without them."

Despite the recent creation of the new Office for National Statistics and a new code of practice governing ministers' relations with it, "this does not go far enough," Mr Straw said. The Government's endless redefinition of the unemployment count, disputes over the validity of National Health Service statistics and lack of data in other areas show there are insufficient safeguards against the temptation of politicians to manipulate public information to best effect, he said.

"The core of the problem goes back to the 1980 Rayner scrutiny of government which established the doctrine that the needs of government alone should determine the work of the government statistical service... Instead, the purpose should be of public interest."

Mr Straw's announcement came as a leading academic warned that the Civil Service had "lost its policy skills" in its recent managerial revolution.

"We now seem to experience more public policy disasters than ever before," Sue Richards, Professor of Public Management at the University of Birmingham, told a conference in London on the future of the Civil Service.

The beef crisis, the poll tax, the arms-to-Iraq affair and the creation of the Child Support Agency were just some of the recent examples, she said.

The new "can do" approach had brought improvements in delivery and management, she said. But it had lost the policy skills, "including the skill of saying 'no can do'". In the Home Office, experience of past failures and successes seemed no longer valued as policies were changed for political reasons. And "the Civil Service seems less able to say to a minister 'Should we be doing this at all?'". Instead, it is all about delivery.

Vulnerable victims 'excluded from support scheme'

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

A Home Office scheme aimed at giving victims of crime a say in the justice system came under attack yesterday for failing to address many of the most serious offences, including murder, manslaughter, domestic violence, and most assaults.

Under the initiative some victims will be given the chance to make a statement explaining how the experience of crime has impacted on their lives. This will be taken into account by police, prosecutors and judges when making key decisions, although victims will not be given any new powers. Another development is the establishment of so-called "one-stop shops" in which every victim will be given the name of a specific police crime desk which will provide information on the progress of a case, including details on whether charges are dropped or reduced and the date of the trial.

But yesterday's announcement, by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, of the updated Victims' Charter was met by criticism from the charity most closely responsible for helping people who have suffered from crime.

Victim Support is concerned that many serious crimes will not be included in the year-long pilot projects which begin in August and operate in the Metropolitan, Merseyside, Lancashire, Hampshire, Sussex and Bedfordshire police areas.

Under the scheme, only victims of certain crimes will be asked if they wish to give statements and to receive further information about their case. Many less serious offences will be excluded because they are deemed too numerous. These

include stalking, racial harassment, domestic violence, less serious assaults, theft and criminal damage under £5,000. In murder and manslaughter cases it is understood that the judiciary and lawyers are opposed to statements being provided by

victim's families because they may be considered part of the evidence and challenged in court. Parents will also be barred from making statements on behalf of their children for similar reasons.

Among crimes that will be included are domestic burglary, grievous bodily harm, robbery, serious sexual assault, and racially motivated offences. Helen Reeves, director of Victim Support, said: "We are very concerned that some of the most vulnerable victims are being excluded from these plans to improve the information they receive and the opportunity to provide details about how crime has affected them. We believe no victim should be excluded."

Nevertheless, Mr Howard predicted that the charter would form "a major contribution towards improving the treatment of victims". He said the new statements would help inform all the agencies involved in the criminal justice system. Today the Home Office will unveil a White Paper, called *On the Record*, which contains proposals for a new vetting agency to check the criminal records of people applying to carry out voluntary and paid work which involves access to children.

Firms to get access to applicant's criminal record

COLIN BROWN and ANTHONY BEVINS

Employers will be given access to a job applicant's criminal record under far-reaching plans to be unveiled in a White Paper by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

The White Paper will also propose giving individual members of the public the right to their own criminal record to show prospective employers that they have a "clean sheet". There is also likely to be an outcry from the civil liberties

lobby over the proposal to set up an agency to deal with the criminal records. Access to criminal records will be limited to certain firms, such as security companies, where the Home Office believes it could help to combat crime.

The records will be a brief summary of the files held on people, and will not give details of the crimes committed. But ministers believe the summary will be helpful to employers in ensuring that they do not put criminals into positions of trust where the public or other firms would

be at risk. The move follows concern about security firms, but it falls short of demands led by Ian McCartney, a Labour spokesman on employment, who has faced personal threats for his calls for a tough regulatory framework to be introduced.

The most serious repeat burglars will not start serving mandatory, three-year minimum sentences for a third offence until the end of 2000 at the earliest. Mr Howard was challenged last night by Jack Straw, Labour's spokesman on home affairs, to confirm research carried

out by the Commons library, which says that in some cases hardcore burglars might not receive their "third strike" punishment until November 2003.

Writing to Mr Howard on the eve of today's Commons debate on sentencing policy, Mr Straw said: "The White Paper states that your proposal could be implemented in October 1999, that the three qualifying convictions must all relate to offences committed after the new legislation has come into force, and that they must relate to three separate court appearances. On this basis, the library estimates that assuming average court delays and assuming that second and third offences were committed the day after completion of court proceedings, or [if a custodial sentence were passed] the day after release, then the following start dates would apply..."

The Commons library said the first possible date would be December 2000, for people who had received two non-custodial sentences in a magistrates' court, through to November 2003 for burglars.

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Dunblane club run like Hitler Youth, says MP

The shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, George Robertson, yesterday told how he removed his young son from a boys' club run by Thomas Hamilton after becoming alarmed at its "Hitler Youth" image.

Mr Robertson told the Cullen inquiry into the Dunblane massacre of 16 pupils and their teacher how Hamilton later confronted him to seek an explanation - and how he sent him packing. So worried were Mr Robertson and other Dunblane parents about Hamilton's activities that they sought to have them curbed. And there was "absolute despair" on their part when Hamilton managed to secure a ruling by the ombudsman upholding his complaint about the council suspending his lettings, Mr Robertson said.

The MP for Hamilton, who lives in Dunblane and was giving evidence on the inquiry's 15th day, told how he raised his concern with the man who is now his chief political opponent, Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland and MP for Stirling. But Mr Forsyth's initial response was one of caution.

Mr Robertson told the inquiry how his son Malcolm, then aged 10, started attending one of Hamilton's clubs at Dunblane High School in 1983. But after going three or four times, the

boy missed one session - and Hamilton wrote a letter to him asking an explanation. Mr Robertson's wife's response was: "How dare you write to my son? He is in the cubs, he goes to school, and a swimming club - and if he is absent, they don't write to him, they write to me."

With another parent, Mr Robertson went to a club session to see what was happening there - and was struck by the "military" atmosphere they saw as they watched, unnoticed, for about 10 minutes.

"I was struck very quickly by the bizarre nature of what was happening inside the gymnasium. There were large numbers of small boys in shorts being bossed around by two to three middle-aged men swaggering around in a very military type of way - a bit like the Hitler Youth, there was certainly a military element in that."

So alarmed was he and the other father that they decided to withdraw their sons immediately. Hamilton came to Mr Robertson's house the next day wanting to know his reasons for withdrawing his son - but Mr Robertson said he did not have to give him reasons.

After that, Mr Robertson and some other parents raised their concern that a club could be run by someone with no apparent qualifications and no

background checks. Hamilton's letting was suspended, and Hamilton waged a campaign against this. Mr Robertson took his concerns to Michael Forsyth, as MP for Stirling, at a private meeting at Westminster. But when Mr Forsyth asked him for details, it was difficult to say what exactly was worrying about Hamilton.

In detailing correspondence with Hamilton over the years, Mr Forsyth told the inquiry: "From 1988 there were numerous letters from Hamilton. He had a capacity to focus in on detailed points and pursue them with a tenacious quality." But he only met Hamilton two or three times over the years. The inquiry continues.



Artful clean-up: Manikins disposing of human figures cut from waste materials in Michael Landy's *Scrapheap Services* installation at the Chisenhale Gallery in Bethnal Green, east London, where it can be seen (Wednesdays to Sundays) until 28 July. Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

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Labour MP George Robertson (left) told Michael Forsyth (right) about his concerns over Thomas Hamilton (centre)

RAC urges 'fine' for roadworks

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Cable and utility companies should pay up to £5,000 a day for digging up roads and causing traffic congestion and delays, the RAC says.

The money could be used for improvements such as road and rail schemes, the RAC suggests in a discussion paper on funding transport. Under the 1991 Streetworks Act councils were given powers to impose penalties if contractors exceed the permitted timescale for streetworks, but the rules have never been implemented.

Edmund King, the RAC campaigns manager, said £5,000 a day was cheap for disruption in an urban area. He cited a recent example in central London where a cable company damaged gas mains in Rosebery Avenue and British Gas spent a month making the right part but then damaged a Thames Water sewer. "This caused delays in a large part of central London ... It was a comedy of errors that

cost Londoners millions of pounds."

Recognising the limits on government spending, the RAC suggests two further ways of raising revenue for transport schemes. First, it suggests that a transport rate be levied on firms by a local authority, with the money being earmarked for specific transport projects.

The City of London Corporation has already put forward the idea of a voluntary extra rate in order to bring forward much needed improvements to the Tube and rail systems but so far has been stymied by opposition from the Treasury over the plan.

The RAC also suggests that the concept of "planning gain", whereby developers contribute to the costs of local infrastructure, should be extended to ensure big transport schemes are included, rather than just near-by roads and junctions.

□ *Funding and managing the future of transport in the UK*, RAC, 14 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5BL, £5.

DAILY POEM

Cotton Country

By Tony Connor
(for Larry Vynali)

Over the disused railroad,
the abandoned brick hotel
and other desolations,
the moon climbs in full splendour
with Venus burning brightly
on the aftermath peacock-
and-bleached-rose of March sunset.

There are gougings and rebuildings,
querulously beautiful.

The town's bronze soldier looks down,
pensive with old destruction,
old victory and defeat.

Fine cars with resounding names
are aimed at outer suburbs.

I walk to evening pleasures
in dark bars, where sad women
complain to one another
of marriage and soured love,
while men who seem to know them
play slow pool in the background.

Tony Connor was born in 1930 in Lancashire and left school at 14. He worked as a textile designer in Manchester until 1960 and in 1962 published the first of seven collections. *With Love Somehow*, which precipitated a change of career to the academic teaching of English. Since 1971 he has been Professor of English at Wesleyan University, Connecticut. *Amvil* next week publish a new collection, *Metamorphic Adventures* (£8.95), from which this poem is taken.

international

Russian elections: President boosts his second-round chances by sacking defence minister and recruiting popular general

Grachev fired as Yeltsin buys Lebed support

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin moved swiftly to boost his re-election chances yesterday by firing his unpopular Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev, and handing two top posts to the man of the moment, Alexander Lebed.

The speed of the President's manoeuvre, only two days after narrowly winning the election's first round, adds to suspicions that the Kremlin covertly supported General Lebed's presidential campaign, in which he came third with a surprisingly high 11 million votes.

It was in the hope of netting those votes in the run-off that Mr Yeltsin yesterday appointed the 46-year-old retired general, a middle-of-the-road nationalist, as secretary of the Security Council and national security adviser. The scalp of the hapless General Grachev is likely to have been one of General Lebed's demands, as the two men hate each other.

Mr Yeltsin was keen to dispel the impression that the appointments were campaign tactics, insisting that General Lebed would have a key role in military reform and fighting crime. "This is not just an

appointment, it is a merger of two politicians, two programs," he said, standing next to General Lebed in the Kremlin.

Within hours of taking up the job, General Lebed was claiming credit for the first success in his drive to impose law and order, saying he had snuffed out an attempted coup within the military to resist General Grachev's sacking.

"People close to the [former] Defence Minister attempted to form GKChP Number three," he said, referring by a Russian acronym to the groups that organised the August 1991 attempted putsch and the conflict between parliament and the Kremlin in 1993.

"They raised a wave which went through the Moscow military district and the airborne troops. Full loyalty was displayed and I know for sure that there will be no disturbances."

Later, he toned down his claims, saying it had merely been an attempt to put pressure on the President.

Mr Lebed's appointment is a setback for Mr Yeltsin's challenger, the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov. He came second with 31.96 per cent to Mr Yeltsin's 35.02, according to preliminary figures.

Although it is unclear what proportion of the Lebed vote will support the President in the second round, his appointment makes it no easier for the Communists to expand their vote of about 24 million. Mr Zyuganov made no secret of his disappointment over the Yeltsin-Lebed pact.

General Lebed will have no truck with the Communists: "I faced two ideas: an old one which caused much bloodshed and a new one which is being carried out very poorly, but to which the future belongs. I choose the new idea."

Yesterday's events look as if they were cooked up some time ago by Mr Yeltsin's campaign managers, after concluding that a strong performance by the general would damage the ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and the Communists.

In the closing days before Sunday's ballot, glossy pro-Lebed television advertisements, made by specialists with close ties with the Kremlin's campaign, started to appear.

"There was a lot of official pressure on the banks not to give money to Grigory Yavlinsky [the leading liberal candidate]," said Sergei Markov, a political analyst with



Dream team: A smiling Mr Yeltsin (right) announces General Lebed's appointment as head of the Security Council

Photograph: AP

the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "This did not apply to General Lebed."

General Lebed has ensured greater powers for his job as secretary of the Security Council, the main-policy making body which oversees the military and

the security services. He will be credited for having got rid of the hated General Grachev, who is widely blamed for the débâcle of the Chechen war.

He also appears to be playing a leading role in choosing the sacked minister's replacement.

Although General Boris Gromov, a strong Yeltsin ally, is tipped for the job, it may remain in the hands of General Mikhail Kolesnikov, 56, chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, who was yesterday named acting Defence Minister.

But his warm relationship with Mr Yeltsin may prove short-lived. He has been given the brief to wipe out corruption. "I don't think he will follow the law," said Mr Markov. "He regards this as a real war against crime. I know there is a big pan-

ic right now among the mafia, because they know he wants to use troops against them."

This could lead to a conflict between the general and the staid characters who surround the President.

Leading article, page 11



Grachev: Blamed by public for Chechen fiasco

A bungling butcher who became a hate figure

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

With the same confidence that one can describe vodka as Russia's favourite drink, Pavel Grachev is the country's most unpopular politician.

Labeled by allegations of corruption and largely responsible for the fiasco in Chechnya, the general, whose surname means rook, is loathed by the young and democratically-minded and by old Communists and the military alike. President Boris

Yeltsin could have fired him from his post as Defence Minister a dozen times over. But he waited for the moment when sacrificing him would have the maximum political effect. That moment came yesterday.

General Grachev must have known the axe was about to fall. "Pavel Sergeyevich understands the President's decision," a Kremlin spokesman said. Russian television suggested he might be sent to Brussels as representative to Nato. There, he is known for having opposed air

strikes on Bosnia and the eastward expansion of the Western alliance. At home, he is seen as a bungler and a butcher.

General Grachev was regarded by army colleagues as a mediocrity whose rise in 1992 to become Defence Minister was surprising. "He was one of the lads. We used to send him out for vodka," said one officer who served with him in Afghanistan. In his photo album he has a picture of Grachev, then a junior officer, killing half-naked under a tree.

But the Defence Minister became a hate figure following revelations of financial abuses while the army was pulling out of Germany, and the murder of one of the journalists who exposed the scandal.

Dimitri Kholodov, of *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, had dug up so much dirt on how top officers enriched themselves by selling army supplies that a parliamentary enquiry had been scheduled. General Grachev was accused of accepting a Mercedes bought from funds

that should have been spent on housing returning Russian soldiers. Russians nicknamed the minister "Pasha" (the diminutive form of Pavel) Mercedes.

But the enquiry never took place. Kholodov was lured to a railway station by an anonymous phone call promising him a suitcase of documents.

The case contained a bomb, which killed him. General Grachev denied involvement but Kholodov's outraged editor pointed the finger of blame directly at him.

Thousands of Russians turned out for Kholodov's funeral. President Yeltsin was expected to sack General Grachev but did not. It was assumed he gave him a second chance because of his dog-like loyalty. Mr Yeltsin was indebted to the minister for having supported him when the President sent tanks against his opponents in the White House in 1993.

Soon the tanks were to roll again, this time into Chechnya. General Grachev was among those who persuaded Mr

Yeltsin in December 1994 that force was the only way to deal with the separatist rebellion. "Give me a unit of paratroopers and we will sort out the Chechens in a couple of hours," General Grachev was reported to have boasted.

The war against the rebels has now been going on for 18 months. 30,000 civilians have been killed and the infrastructure of the region has been almost destroyed. Mr Grachev, indeed, has been only a liability to the Kremlin leader.

Paris tries new campus reforms

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The French government yesterday announced a "rolling reform" of its much-criticised higher education sector, intended to reduce the drop-out and failure rate, improve access to higher education and make better use of funds.

The Education Minister, François Bayrou, set out the principles of the changes in a speech to students and politicians in the Sorbonne, in Paris.

Among the reforms are proposed improvements to the student grant to take greater account of individual and family circumstances, attempts to match students and courses better and a restructuring of uni-

versity appointments and the academic career ladder to reduce the number of unemployed PhDs and doctoral candidates. However, no reforms will be introduced until the academic year 1997-98 at the earliest.

Any form of selection for higher education has been shelved. But more information is to be supplied to pupils about the failure rate on courses and employment prospects, in the hope that their choice of subjects and universities will be better informed.

Student numbers in France have almost doubled over the past decade, with the only formal qualification required for a university place being the Baccalauréat, an approximate

equivalent to A-levels. University facilities are overcrowded and often poorly maintained, even at the Sorbonne. The drop-out rate has risen to 20 per cent in the first year, and the failure rate after four or five years approaches 50 per cent in some technological disciplines.

Tackling the education system has been a political hot potato for French governments. In the past five years alone, four attempts at reform – the introduction of selection for higher education, changes in the grant system, provision for private schools and a further attempt at higher-education reform – have been abandoned after resistance by students and teachers.

Last autumn, protests against student overcrowding and

shortages of teachers and facilities were halted only when Mr Bayrou was given more funds to fill empty posts, improve libraries and laboratories and set up a system of special envoys to all universities to examine the problems.

Jacques Chirac set the overhaul of French education as a priority for his presidency more than a year ago. He even had the constitution amended to provide for a promised referendum on the subject. By the first anniversary of his presidency last month, however, neither the reform nor the referendum had appeared, and Mr Chirac was driven to criticise Mr Bayrou by name for the apparent slowness with which his ministry was moving.

PHIL DAVISON
Miami

They are being dubbed the Mickey Finns of the Nineties. New synthetic drugs slipped into women's drinks are blamed for at least a dozen rapes in the Miami area.

The drugs, said to be coming illegally from South America, are available on Miami's trendy South Beach district for between \$2 and \$5 a pill, police say. Not only do they remove the consumer's inhibitions when mixed with alcohol but they cause short-term amnesia, making arrests rare.

Concerned by abuse of their product, the manufacturer of one of the drugs, Hoffman-La Roche, says it will launch a tele-

vision and radio campaign in Florida aimed at women and with the slogan "When you drink, watch it!" The adverts will warn women not to leave their drinks unattended while they dance or go to the toilet.

On 22 February this year, a 30-year-old woman was raped by two men in a car in the park of a night club in the Florida town of Boca Raton. Sheriff's deputies said that the woman could remember little but blood tests revealed she had ingested GHB (gamma hydroxy butyrate), a synthetic weight-loss drug that can cause memory loss.

After a night club employee came forward as a witness and identified the car, police found plastic bottles of GHB in the ve-

hicle's glove compartment and charged two men with rape.

The best-known of the new Mickey Finns, however, is Rohypnol, a strong sleeping tablet produced by Hoffman-La Roche, according to Florida police.

Described by local media as the "hot new drug on the nightclub circuit on South Beach", it has been illegal in the US since March but is said to be widely available in other countries.

South American dealers call the tablets "roofies" or "roachies" and say they are many times stronger than Valium.

Florida prosecutors are pressing to define the drug legally as "dangerous" and of no medical benefit. They describe how "spiked" drinks had left victims

incapacitated within minutes, leaving them unable to fight off their attackers and hardly able to remember what happened. The drinks had shown no strange taste or colour, all said.

Hoffman-La Roche, while launching the campaign to prevent Rohypnol's abuse, insists it is of benefit to many people with insomnia. About a million people worldwide are said to take the drug legally, through prescriptions, to help treat insomnia.

On Monday, five rape victims appeared before the Attorney General of Florida, Bob Butterworth, at a hearing to help him decide how to categorise Rohypnol. All had allegedly been slipped the drug before being attacked.

Paris tries new campus reforms Rapists slip drugs into drinks

Tale of brutality sours life in the Big Apple

NEW YORK DAYS

on the East Side. She escaped with bad bruises. Two days later he surfaced in Yonkers at the northern edge of New York, beating a woman on a highway footbridge. She remains in a critical condition. Then he beat and killed a woman as she opened a dry-cleaning store at 5am on one of the posher stretches of Park Avenue.

Some of the murders make it into the newspapers – especially if the victim is a police officer, a child or white – but many do not. But once in a while, some evil is committed that strikes this city deep in its gut. And, boy, does it then pay attention.

With a spree of brutal attacks against four women over eight days this month, John Royster found Gotham City's weak spot. As the story unfolded each day in the tabloids and on the television news, the story of Royster hurt because it had not just happened in New York but because it was also so obviously of New York.

He struck first in Central Park. He seized a lone woman in the afternoon as she walked a path close to a children's playground, beat her head against a rock and sexually assaulted her. The 32-year-old victim, whose name has been withheld by police, is still in hospital in a deep coma.

The next day, he smashed the face of Shelby Evans, 51, against the tarmac as she was walking

curately, a grand jury sworn yesterday, conclude that he is the latter, he will more than likely face the death penalty when he is brought to trial.

But just as typical of this city are his victims. The Central Park woman was born to Armenian immigrants and, like so many other young people in New York, dreamed that her talent

as a pianist would eventually bring to professional fame. She wanted to play at Carnegie Hall. Instead, she used to play to customers at the nearby showroom of Steinway & Sons and teach in her West Side apartment. With each day, hopes that she will awake from her coma grow slimmer.

Evelyn Alvarez, 65, murdered as she arrived from her home in Queens to open her Park Avenue dry cleaners, was also part of the essence of New York. She was known as the "Lollipop Lady" because of the kindness she showed to the children who came into her shop, often accompanied by

nannies rather than parents. Born in South China and married to a Colombian, she was one of thousands of immigrants who have come here in search of freedom and even riches – the American Dream.

The funeral for Mrs Alvarez, attended by family, locals and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, was in Woodside on Monday.

"New York is the greatest city of the face of the earth, not because of the rich and famous who live in Manhattan, but be-

cause of the contributions of thousands of immigrants who have made this city what it is today," Monsignor Joseph Fimery told mourners. "They built our churches and our cathedrals, and today their services and their hard work and their sweat keep this city alive and healthy."

Probably, however, Royster grabbed the attention of this metropolis because he chose to strike first in Central Park. One of the Park's first commissioners wrote in 1867 that the point of this 867 acres of glades, meadows and pathways was to "dispel from the mind of the visitor, once within its enclosure,

thoughts of business and memories calculated to sadden or depress".

A commissioner serving today suggested that Central Park was the "front yard" of every New Yorker. A writer in the *New York Times* went further, arguing that the Park was actually the city's cathedral.

New Yorkers always react when the Park, their shared sacred place, is defiled. What Royster did has already been added to that compendium of infamous Central Park outrages.

They include the case of the "preppie murderer", Robert Chambers, who strangled Jennifer Levin in the shadow of the Metropolitan Museum of Art 10 years ago; the brutal rape and beating of the Central Park jogger in April 1989 by a group of young men on a "wilding" spree; and, finally, the murder last September of a 44-year-old Brazilian woman on for a run.

The Royster story has been huge, partly because the tabloid editors have chosen to make it so. But this has been a story with legs because the people of this city are not as inured to violent crime as the clichés about it might suggest. Sometimes a crime arises with which everyone can connect; and they are fascinated and appalled.

David Osborne

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صكرا من الامال

Inside Burma: The democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi tells of her latest clash with the junta

Beacon of freedom bides her time

THOMAS CALEB
Bangkok

All his tar charts and astrology tales (by the official soothsayer used by Burma's generals) of the horrendous gaffe he was about to commit.

Members of the ruling junta had gathered for the consecration of a Buddhist pagoda in Mandalay and the astrologer, Myaung, was down in a freshly dug hole, calculating the exact, auspicious moment when the foundation stone was to be laid. Finally, he called up to the generals: "Respected sirs, the time has come for you to leave your seats and step down."

As they rose decorously, a titter raced through the crowd. The Burmese have an ear for puns and Myaung's command was interpreted to have a double meaning: he was ordering the junta to resign and restore democracy. The generals were unmoved: Myaung was demoted and now peddles horoscopes. Whatever divinations he may now be making about the regime, he keeps to himself.

It is not a matter he dares to share with foreign visitors. Yet in a country obsessed with horoscopes and numerology, talk in the Rangoon market-places is of shifting planets over the next two months which will usher in big political changes.

But instead of star-gazing, the Burmese have to glance no farther than down a certain street in Rangoon - University Avenue, home of the opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, to reach the same conclusion.

She and her pro-democracy supporters are on a collision course with the junta, known as Slorc (the State Law and Order Restoration Council). Editorials in the military-run press vilify her as a "puppet princess" and "sorceress" unleashed against Burma by Britain. Many Burmese brush aside these accusations as ridiculous; they also find the slurs against Ms Suu Kyi to be repugnant.

At her rally last weekend, she cautioned some 6,000 supporters not to become angry over insults slung at her by the military press.

She told the *Independent*:

"The Slorc say that we are provocative but look at the articles that appear in their newspaper. It tells more about them than me." In the house beside the lake where she spent six years under house arrest, Ms Suu Kyi spoke of her latest showdown with Slorc, which has passed a law that threatens her and her supporters with up to 20 years' jail for attending one of her pro-democracy rallies.

"We're flexible. May I suggest that Slorc try some friendly persuasion with us instead of using the hammers," she suggested. More than 120 members of her National League for Democracy (NLD) have been under arrest since last month, when Ms Suu Kyi called a party congress to draw up a new constitution. It was after this "provocation" that Slorc lashed back with draconian new laws.

"We're committed to preparing a draft constitution but we're down to earth. That means we don't have any intention of writing a constitution and showing it down people's throats," she said. Pro-democracy activists want to reduce to military's sway over future civilian governments. Since her release from detention in July, the junta has snubbed Ms Suu Kyi, who realises that she could face re-arrest.

"It's a possibility. Maybe the Slorc is just biding its time. But even if I'm arrested, we'll continue our work for democracy. These threats are nothing new to us," she added, laughing.

After seeing how many of her supporters defied the Slorc's ban on her rallies, many Western observers in Rangoon predict that putting Ms Suu Kyi back in detention could lead to public unrest, which she opposes. She said: "I'd like to think that even without me, people would find a safe but effective way of carrying on our movement."

Many Rangoon diplomats claim that if the junta were to lock up the Nobel Peace Prize winner again, many countries which were willing to overlook the army's ugly traits - its widespread use of forced labour, its corruption and its human-rights violations - might withdraw their investment.

Since 1990, Burma's gener-



People's champion: Ms Suu Kyi, who is on a collision course with the generals

Photograph: Robert Moyer/Katz

als have only managed to attract \$800m in investment, far less than their Asian neighbours.

Ms Suu Kyi has hesitated on calling for fullscale international sanctions against the Slorc, since this would hurt the Burmese, who are among Asia's poorest people.

"When you look at our country, do not just see it as a land of economic possibilities... Understand that we also want to live peacefully," Ms Suu Kyi explained to foreign business-

men recently. The economy is so mismanaged that even though Burma is one of the region's biggest rice producers, little boys at the Rangoon river docks trail after the stevedores, hoping to catch a few falling grains of rice from leaky sacks.

And now she says wistfully: "Maybe the Slorc doesn't understand that they have nothing to lose in talking to us. But perhaps they're too attached to all their medals and other trappings."

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Hillary Clinton was accused of a "grave" abuse of power by the Republican majority on the Senate Whitewater committee yesterday in covering up her involvement in the protracted controversy. But minority Democrats retorted that the report was a partisan and "despicable" attempt to smear the First Lady in an election year.

With much of the committee's 700-page report leaked, the final exchanges centred on the rediscovery of subpoenaed billing records of Mrs Clinton in the White House private quarters last January. Mrs Clinton had been the most likely person to put them there, the Republicans declared - a matter of "grave legal implication". However, the committee's ranking Democrat, Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, said that "having failed to furnish the President, the Committee was on a massive witch-hunt against Mrs Clinton." *Rupert Cornwell - Washington*

Torture and human rights abuses in 146 countries last year were partly the fault of Western countries - including Britain, France and the US - who allow the export of instruments of torture, Amnesty International said. "Responsibility for human rights abuses does not lie only with those who put the trigger or apply the electric shock," Pierre Sanz, the Secretary General, said, launching Amnesty's 1996 report. "It also lies with those who supply the weapons and training needed to use them." In the report, Amnesty singles out China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the US as "trading in terror." *Christopher Bellamy*

Haiti's feared militia leader Emmanuel Constant, wanted for murder and torture, has been freed from jail in the US. Constant, 39, led the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FAPAH), a group of armed thugs which terrorised the population with the blessing of the army. Its activities helped trigger the September 1994 intervention by US troops. After fleeing to the US in December 1994, Constant was arrested and was expected to be deported to Haiti for trial. *Phil Davison*

Latvia's president, Guntis Ulmanis, was re-elected for a second term by parliament, and vowed to continue a strong pro-Western foreign policy. Mr Ulmanis, seen as the candidate who would most guarantee internal political stability, gained 53 votes in the 100-seat parliament of the Baltic state. He said he would keep the country on track in efforts to get European Union (EU) and Nato entry. *Riga, Reuter*

A mass grave of 10,000 people killed by the Nazis in the Second World War has been found in Belarus, a defence ministry official said. The grave, in a ditch about 400 yards long, was discovered on the outskirts of Minsk. Many of the victims were Soviet Army soldiers, but there were also many civilians, including women and children. *Minsk*

Two black churches in Mississippi were destroyed by "suspicious" fires late on Monday, police said, adding to a wave of suspected arson attacks on churches that has swept the South of the United States. The 109-year-old Mount Pleasant Missionary Church and the Central Grove Church joined a list of 34 other black churches have been hit by fire over the past 18 months. *Reuter, Corinth, Mississippi*

The arms embargo against states of the former Yugoslavia has been terminated following an arms control agreement among them, the president of the UN Security Council announced. The embargo was imposed in September 1991 to curb fighting which erupted when Slovenia and Croatia declared independence. The Muslim-led government in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which declared independence in 1992, had long complained the embargo denied it the right to defend itself.

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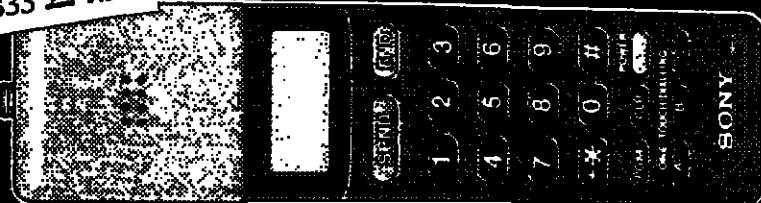
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international

Netanyahu hits first crisis over cabinet line-up

ERIC SILVER
Jerusalem

Israel's new Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, broke all records last night by presenting his government to parliament only 18 days after his election was confirmed, but walked straight into a cabinet crisis.

Two of Mr Netanyahu's Likud party heavyweights, the former defence minister, Ariel Sharon, and the former foreign minister, David Levy, were absent from the initial cabinet list and boycotted the session of the Knesset.

Mr Levy had been offered his old post at the foreign ministry, but threw MPs into disarray by refusing to accept the post until the Prime Minister allocates Mr Sharon a senior portfolio. Later, Mr Levy said that Mr Sharon would be offered a specially created portfolio, as minister of the national infrastructure.

Mr Netanyahu is keeping the foreign ministry open for Mr Levy, whose Geshet splinter group holds seven of Likud's 32 Knesset seats. The Prime Minister will act for the time being as Foreign Minister.

Limor Livnat, the only woman on Mr Netanyahu's team (as Communications Minister), predicted the crisis would be short-lived. But Mr Levy and Mr Sharon have a long record of sticking their heads into the sides of their own leaders. Mr Levy has old scores to settle from the days when Mr Netanyahu, as his insubordinate deputy, conspired to undermine his authority as foreign minister.

Mr Sharon's original omission from the top cabinet ranks ("unthinkable", in Mr Levy's words) was clumsy and ungracious. It was the burly old warrior who persuaded Mr Levy and another right-wing maverick, Rafael Eitan, to withdraw from the prime ministerial race, leaving Mr Netanyahu a clear run against Labour's Shimon Peres. Mr Sharon also brokered the deal that won the Likud candidate the crucial

ultra-Orthodox vote. Building a coalition of six right-wing, religious, ethnic and centrist parties proved a crash course in the realities of Israeli politics for the 46-year-old Mr Netanyahu who had never been more than a deputy minister. He learned the hard way that even a prime minister cannot rule as he pleases.

The coalition parties, including his own Likud, still have their separate aspirations,



David Levy: Refuses to join cabinet without Sharon

interests and constituencies. If the Prime Minister wants to get his legislative programme through and win a second term four years down the line, he has to satisfy their competing demands.

Mr Netanyahu chose Yitzhak Mordechai, another former general, as Defence Minister. The stolid and popular Mr Mordechai is a political novice. Unlike Mr Sharon, the architect of the disastrous 1982 invasion of Lebanon, he can be relied on not to make waves.

Once he was denied Defence, Mr Sharon demanded Finance, another china shop which Mr Netanyahu was determined to exclude him from. The job went to Dan Meridor, the former justice minister.

In his inaugural speech last night, Mr Netanyahu pledged to continue the search for peace with Israel's neighbours. He appealed to the leaders of

Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia to negotiate without conditions. But the new government's manifesto was condemned by the Palestinians and the Syrians. Mahmoud Abbas, the chief Palestinian negotiator in talks on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, said Mr Netanyahu's positions "contradict the spirit of peace." They were, he said, "uncompromising and stubborn."

The Netanyahu government said it undertook to "negotiate with the Palestinian Authority, with the intent of reaching a permanent arrangement, on the condition that the Palestinians fulfil all their commitments fully." This gives Mr Netanyahu an escape hatch if he does not like the way the negotiations are leading, as neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians have fulfilled all their commitments.

But Mr Netanyahu rules out a Palestinian state, or a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. He is offering the Palestinians only "an arrangement whereby they will be able to conduct their lives freely within the framework of self-government."

The new government also rejects a "right of return of Arab populations to any part of the Land of Israel west of the Jordan river". This condemns hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees outside the West Bank and Gaza to permanent exile. On Jerusalem, Mr Netanyahu asserts that the city will "remain forever under Israel's sovereignty".

The guidelines make no mention of Hebron, the last West Bank town under Israeli occupation, which Israel was supposed to evacuate in March. However, they talk of strengthening and retaining Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

On the Syrian front, the incoming Government says it "views the Golan Heights as essential to the security of the state and its water resources". It adds: "Retaining Israeli sovereignty over the Golan will be the basis for an arrangement with Syria."



Arms and the men: Sudanese army volunteers on weapons training in the desert outside Khartoum

Photograph: AFP

Sudan 'faces mutiny and revolt'

The main opposition group claims the Islamic-backed regime could be ousted by next month, writes David Orr

Asmara - Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist government could fall within the next two to three weeks, according to the country's main opposition grouping, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The overthrow of the Khartoum regime, said the NDA, would be precipitated by an infitida (uprising), accompanied by the mutiny of a large part of the Sudanese armed forces. The regime of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir could have collapsed by the middle of next month, they say.

These predictions follow last week's issuing of an NDA ultimatum to the government to step down peacefully. The NDA's members include the two leading opposition parties, the Umma (Nation) Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, as well as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA),

which has been fighting the forceful imposition of Islam on the southern part of the country since 1983.

"We plan to ignite a popular uprising in a dozen towns and cities across northern Sudan," said Omar Nureldayem, secretary of the Umma Party and a former finance minister. "We don't expect a government capitulation but we do believe there will be military support for the uprising."

Dissatisfaction has been growing with the military junta of General Bashir, which is inspired by the National Islamic Front (NIF) of the ideologue Hassan al-Turabi. The costly effects of the war, human rights abuses and crippling price rises have caused hardship and suffering in the Arab north.

From abroad, there has been mounting criticism of Khartoum, which is accused of sponsoring international terrorism. In April the United Nations imposed diplomatic and travel sanctions on Khartoum for its failure to hand over suspects wanted in connection with last year's attempted assassination of the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak.

"The time is now ripe for an uprising in Sudan," said Dr Nureldayem who, with other

members of the NDA's opposition-in-exile, is based in the Eritrean capital, Asmara. "There will be casualties - perhaps a few thousand people will die. But the intervention of the army would considerably reduce the bloodshed."

Protests against price rises, in the past largely restricted to the Sudanese capital, have been brutally suppressed by the Khartoum government. The NDA predicts that recent increases in the price of fuel and other commodities will impel large sections of the population to take to the streets in a show of discontent in coming weeks.

"It is our intention that the Khartoum regime be overthrown from inside Sudan," said General Fathi Ali, a former commander of the Sudanese navy and now military head of the NDA based in Asmara.

"We expect the NIF government will try to suppress the planned demonstrations. But more than 90 per cent of the Sudanese army is on our side and there will be a mutiny if the government uses force. The uprising will take several days to build up. Within a week to 10 days we will have secured the overthrow of the regime."

General Ali, a graduate of Camberley army staff college,

said he could muster a "small but capable armed force" to advance on Khartoum from the Eritrean border region.

Eritrea broke diplomatic relations with Sudan a year and a half ago over Khartoum's support of Eritrean Jihad, a small but potentially destabilising force of exiled Eritreans committed to the overthrow of President Issaias Afewerki. Since then Eritrea has been providing military training to the Sudanese opposition at bases in western Eritrea.

"The Sudanese allied forces can be counted in their hundreds," said a Western diplomat in Asmara. "There are guerrilla bands operating out of a number of bases inside Eritrea. Militarily, they're like mosquito bites but psychologically they're very important."

The opposition has the potential to seriously harass Khartoum. It has forced the Sudanese army to move resources from southern Sudan and deploy significant units in the north-eastern region.

The Eritreans, who recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of their successful struggle for independence, are regarded as having produced one of the most

capable guerrilla forces in African history. The insurgents of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, who now form the ruling Eritrean Party for Democracy and Justice, were backed by Khartoum during their secessionist war.

Like other countries in the region, Eritrea has been unable to dissuade Khartoum from attempts to export Islamic fundamentalism beyond its borders. In recent months there has been an increase in Eritrean Jihad raids into Eritrea from Sudan and the two countries' border region is described as extremely tense. Ethiopia and Uganda have also accused Khartoum of destabilisation by mounting cross-border raids into their territories.

While Ethiopia and Uganda have been circumspect in their support of the Sudanese armed opposition, particularly of the SPLA, Eritrea has made no secret of backing anti-Khartoum elements. The NDA operates openly from the former Sudanese embassy in Asmara. "We realise there is no possibility of making Khartoum change its mind," said the Eritrean Foreign Minister, Petros Solomon. "It has shown a very clear intention to destroy our government. We have no alternative but to resist and to help the alternative Sudanese political parties press for a change in Khartoum."

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Valujet backlash hits air watchdog

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

A major shake-up is looming at the Federal Aviation Administration following its failure to tackle the safety problems at Valujet which led to the indefinite grounding of the low-fare airline this week - five weeks after the Florida crash which killed 110 people.

Valujet's closure - officially "voluntary" but in effect coerced by the FAA - was the climax of a month of intense scrutiny by the watchdog agency, which posted inspectors on every Valujet flight in the wake of the DC-9 crash in the Everglades.

The ultimate indictment is devastating. The month-long check uncovered "system-wide deficiencies" in Valujet's maintenance programmes, doubts about the airworthiness of several aircraft, and "multiple shortcomings" in Valujet's control of the outside contractors.

But the report is also an indictment of the FAA, which well before the crash had identified problems at Valujet but failed to act. The agency had been "lax" and "clearly we have some

culpability" the FAA head, David Hinson, said yesterday. This admission is expected to cost the job of Anthony Broderick, associate administrator for certification and regulation of airlines.

For Valujet, which describes the closure as "grossly unfair", the outlook is bleak. With cash reserves of more than \$100m, the airline is not expected to file for bankruptcy. But, according to many industry analysts, it must get back into the air within a month if it is to have a chance of survival.

That goal may however be unattainable. The FAA said it would not re-authorise operations until Valujet "demonstrates appropriate corrective action". The affair is also an acute embarrassment to Federico Pena, the Transportation Secretary, who 24 hours after the crash on 11 May pronounced Valujet to be "a safe airline" despite FAA internal reports suggesting the contrary.

The accident is believed to have been the result of a fire in the cargo hold caused by the explosion of full oxygen containers mistakenly loaded on board.

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مكتبة الامم

Russia's opportunity for democratic reform

Western governments are understandably relieved at the results of last Sunday's presidential election in Russia. Although nothing can be taken for granted, President Boris Yeltsin seems likely to see off his Communist challenger, Gennady Zyuganov, in the second round of voting in early July.

Mr Zyuganov's nostalgia for the Soviet Union, his past involvement in hardline Communist and Russian nationalist causes and his obvious lack of enthusiasm for private enterprise would make him, from a Western point of view, a less suitable occupant of the presidency than Mr Yeltsin, the devil we know and, as often as not, get on with. If it should turn out that Russian voters share this assessment, that would be a welcome sign of maturity from an electorate that received its first taste of free political choice only seven years ago.

There were other positive features to Sunday's elections. Although a strong pro-Yeltsin bias in the state-run media marred the campaign, the voting and ballot-counting went smoothly and fairly. This was a big improvement on the parliamentary elections and constitutional referendum of December 1993, when extensive ballot-rigging probably took place.

Also on the plus side was the poor performance of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the foul-mouthed extreme nationalist

who came fifth with less than 6 per cent of the vote. It remains disturbing that more than four million Russians thought that he should be made one of the most powerful men on earth, but at least this particular dog seems to have had his day.

Finally, it may be no bad thing that the election has created an overnight political star in the shape of Alexander Lebed. A retired army general who is little known in the West, he was appointed yesterday as Mr Yeltsin's top national security adviser and secretary of the powerful presidential Security Council. He quickly made it clear that he viewed his responsibilities as covering not just defence, foreign affairs and internal security, but economic policy areas such as privatisation and the problem of capital flight.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion, from that weighty agglomeration of portfolios, that Mr Lebed has just become the second most powerful man in Russia. No doubt the president's loyal Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, would disagree. But Mr Lebed now has a proven base of electoral support - more than 10 million votes - whereas Mr Chernomyrdin was humiliated in last December's parliamentary elections. Mr Yeltsin even hinted yesterday that he regarded Mr Lebed as a suitable successor as president. That is not surprising, given Mr Lebed's age (he is only 46), his status



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as Russia's most popular general, and the similarities between the two men's political views and instincts.

As the pivotal figure in a second Yeltsin term, Mr Lebed should have much to contribute. His main difference with Mr Yeltsin is over Chechnya: he has been one of Russia's most outspoken critics of the botched military crackdown. With the intransigent Pavel Grachev kicked out yesterday as defence minister, that provides grounds for hoping that the Chechen war will be brought to a swift conclusion - and not before time.

Like Mr Yeltsin, and unlike Mr

Zyuganov, Mr Lebed does not suffer from nostalgia for the Soviet command economy. Though a soldier rather than an economist, he recognises the virtues of the free market and would broadly support Mr Yeltsin's reforms. With continued help from Western financial institutions, there is no reason why Russia's transformation into a successful market economy should not be complete by 2000.

Mr Lebed will also want to clamp down on tax evasion, racketeering and other forms of illegal self-enrichment by Russia's new classes of businessmen and gangsters. Many Russians would

argue that it is high time the government got to grips with this problem. But the political temperature will zoom up in Moscow if Mr Lebed investigates the privatisation of some of Russia's biggest state companies and confirms the truth of rumours that there is corruption in high places.

The main problem thrown up by the election and its immediate fall-out lies in the impact on Russia's political system. If Russia can be considered a constitutional democracy, it is an imperfect one with authoritarian features. By giving a man of Mr Lebed's immense, if suddenly acquired, political weight the job of steering the Security Council, Mr Yeltsin is strengthening an institution over which parliament and the courts have no oversight.

The council's far-reaching powers and lack of accountability go a long way to explaining why the Russian intervention in Chechnya has so badly blundered. Perhaps Mr Lebed can help to correct the Chechnya mistakes, but the heart of the problem will remain: parliament and the law are too weak in relation to selective presidential organs of authority. Matters are made worse by Mr Yeltsin's propensity to take political advice from insiders such as his personal bodyguard, Alexander Kozlov, as much as from his government ministers.

If Mr Yeltsin defeats Mr Zyuganov

by a convincing margin, he would have an opportunity to democratise Russia's political institutions. To judge from his recent record, however, it seems doubtful that he will choose this path. That will be a missed opportunity, because we need a more democratic Russia as much as the Russians do.

In defence of the national dish

David Blunkett is troubled by E-numbers and B-numbers. Minimum nutritional standards are essential, he insists, to tempt children back from the chip shop and into the hall for their daily school dinner.

Has he tried a school meal lately? Lack of nutrition is the least of it. Far worse is the daily abuse of innocent palates. At least the soggy swede and cabbage doled out by Mrs Wham-it-on were rich enough in taste to be genuinely revolting. Today's chill-cooked offerings are more bland than the packaging they arrive in. They are a gastronomic insult.

Far better that the next generation's gourmets lunch on our most celebrated national dish: fresh fish (that brain-food!) swiftly fried alongside slivers of potato (that vitamin C!), all heavily seasoned to taste.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sabotage of Britain's role in Europe

Sir: As an Englishman and a European I have never felt so profoundly ashamed.

In his Iron Curtain speech Winston Churchill was honest enough to explain that European unity was an excellent thing for the Continent, but that Britain would applaud from the sidelines.

When the Council of Europe began operating in 1949, Ernest Bevin and the Foreign Office saw to it that member governments gave it no real teeth. This policy was pursued consistently by HM Government throughout the Fifties and Sixties. When in opposition, authentic Europeans such as Harold Macmillan or Roy Jenkins spoke up convincingly in the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, but as soon as they assumed governmental responsibility they relapsed into Foreign Office negativism, or even tried to sabotage the emerging European Community. Only Ted Heath showed himself to be a loyal European while at the top.

Finally, Britain understood that her sheer self-interest made it inescapable for her to join the club. But the spirit of sabotage continued to lurk, culminating in the series of disasters of the Thatcher regime.

Now we have incontrovertible proof of the cynical contempt with which her Government betrayed the trust of the peoples of the Continent in 1988, selling off poisoned goods under false pretences.

Not since the Belgians went down have I felt it so difficult to look my neighbours here in the face.

JOHN PRIESTMAN
Strasbourg

The writer was clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly from 1971-1986.

Sir: John Major has been widely and rightly commended for his condemnation of two of his junior colleagues for threatening to withhold their support across the "Parliamentary board" in pursuance of a single political object dear to their hearts ("Pork-barrel politics come to Britain", 14 June).

Jacques Santer could surely be forgiven for strongly complaining about HM Government holding up the progress of all new business until we get what we want, on a single issue of great importance to us - a solution of the beef crisis.

Sir FREDERIC BENNETT
Machynlleth, Powys

Pleasures of parenthood

Sir: At the time when I became a father 25 years ago, I felt very much as Fran Abrams does ("My nest is empty, and I love it", 15 June). I was not sure I wanted the responsibility of children and only concurred because my wife was so anxious to have a family. With hindsight, I am glad that her wiser counsels prevailed.

Kids bleed you of money and emotion and force you to spend countless hours watching their antics on football, hockey and cricket pitches, or at the edge of show-jumping arenas. I would not have missed a second of it. Parenthood has been arduous but tremendous fun.



My Dad's done more to break down the class system than your Dad!

Ms Abrams made her choice and I made mine - and we are both happy with the outcome. I take issue, however, with her assumption that childbirth has been promoted to keep women in their place and to ensure the care of parents in their old age.

Parenthood can also keep fathers in their place. But most importantly, she assumes that, because she has always been financially self-sufficient, she will not be a burden to any children in her old age. No matter what provision she has made for her retirement, the wealth to service it has got to be generated within the continuing workings of society - that is, by my children and their peers.

CHRIS MOWBRAY
Tibberton, Worcestershire

Sir: Fran Abrams is right. Children are expensive and prevent one from doing your own thing (for a short time relative to one's whole life). I respect her decision not to have children.

However, while sitting outside with my two children, eating pizzas before bedtime, and listening to my nine-year-old telling a subversive and lavatorial story to amuse her six-year-old brother, it struck me, not for the first time, that children bring an extra dimension to one's existence, and provide a very necessary foil to our overweening concerns with our careers and ourselves. If Ms Abrams doesn't want to have children then she shouldn't have any. But she is missing out.

ANNE COFFEY
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Base MPs' pay on productivity

Sir: You support a 30 per cent pay increase for MPs (leading article, 18 June). Later this week I shall be trying to persuade university academics to accept a pay increase which, for the second year running, will be one per cent below the inflation of retail prices. These academics are intelligent people; they will think a salary of £45,000 for an MP is not outrageous. However, they will not understand why you do not call for an increase in productivity in the form of a 30 per cent cut in the number of MPs.

Over several years Parliament has supported the imposition of "efficiency gains" on the public sector so that more has to be done for less. We are all entitled to see MPs gagging and spluttering in the attempt to swallow their own medicine.

S P ROUSE
Chief Executive
Universities and Colleges
Employers Association
London W1

Branson against the oligopolists

Sir: Professor Doganis' time as chairman of state-owned and subsidised Olympic Airways appears to have done little to improve his understanding of the importance of competition in air transport and the need to protect the interests of consumers (Letters, 18 June).

He professes not to comprehend the difference between the proposed merger between British Airways and American Airlines and the co-operative agreement signed in 1994 between Virgin Atlantic and Delta Airways, and accuses me of crying foul because someone has put together a bigger alliance than ours.

One obvious difference is that BA is, by its own admission, the largest international scheduled airline in the world. It will be merging with the world's second largest international and domestic airline. Together they will control over 60 per cent of air traffic between the UK and US, and even higher shares on some individual routes. How can anyone seriously compare the impact on competition and consumer choice of such a merger with any deal involving Virgin Atlantic?

The second important difference is that our arrangement with Delta was not a merger. We sell blocks of seats to Delta, who then compete with us in the marketplace. We are not allowed to collude on prices and unlike BA and American we have not sought exemption from the competition laws in Europe or the US to do so.

When approving the Virgin Atlantic/Delta alliance both the UK and US governments recognised that it would increase competition on the North Atlantic, not reduce it. I challenge anyone to prove that the same is true for the BA/American merger.

RICHARD BRANSON
Chairman
Virgin Group of Companies
London W8

After divorce, fault lives on

Sir: Whatever Polly Toynbee's opinion (17 June), fault in divorce is not a "concept" that can be killed off by legislation. All too often it is a tragic fact. Of course, there are (perhaps many) cases in which a fictional fault is invented to speed up legal proceedings. There is no reason why these should not instead end in no-fault divorce acknowledging that the marriage died on its feet out of nothing worse than neglect. But there are also (far too many) cases in which an innocent party falls victim to very real physical or emotional violence. It helps no one except the perpetrator of this violence to dissolve such marriages in the same way.

Once divorce has ended the marriage, life goes on. Both parties will probably enter into new relationships. Despite previous hurts, they may remarry. To have a chance of thriving, those future relationships will have to be built on a candid acknowledgement of what went before. A person who has been battered and betrayed needs to have that past known and allowance made for it. Someone who has used a previous relationship as an opportunity to brutalise and belittle should not be left free to inflict the same undeserved punishment on another unsuspecting partner.

The Rev TONY WHIFF
Whitehaven, Cumbria

Honest broker for Ulster

Sir: As an American professor of politics and for 20 years a resident of the home town of George Mitchell (chairman of the peace talks on Northern Ireland), I have followed his career closely since before he went to Washington ("Revealed: the 'Irish-American' senator who is as Irish as a stuffed vine leaf", 17 June). Three comments might be of interest.

First, whilst his father was Irish and Catholic, his mother was Lebanese, and that Maronite tradition was a far more important part of his upbringing. Second, he has always been reasonably close to the Kennedy's - most New England Democrats are. But those links have little to do with their stands on things Irish (as odd as that might seem to British readers) and reflect, instead, shared views on at least a dozen other issues. Finally, while no one would ever claim that George Mitchell has one of the great creative minds of the 20th century, he is a remarkably fair and honest man who excels at forging coalitions amongst disagreeing politicians. If a "third party" could help the peace process, few people in the world could do a better job.

CHARLES HAUS
Lower Shiplake, Oxfordshire

Single service

Sir: As an alternative to Dr Norman Tanner's suggestion (Letters, 17 June), what about introducing the real double fault: a serve that was both wide and long would not qualify for a second attempt.

HARVEY R COLE
Winchester

The horrors of getting a visa in Moscow

Sir: Further to the article "Russian fans cry foul at visa chaos" (12 June) and the letter "UK snubs Russians" (15 June), my daughter, who is teaching in Moscow for part of her gap year before going to university, has had recent experience of trying to obtain a visa for a Russian friend.

She writes: "At 7am tomorrow I am meeting Marsha at the embassy to try and get to the front of the queue for British visas, which stretches round the block. It opens at 9am. The visa section is horrible - just queues of desperate people, and the odd board stuck to the front of the building with glittering photos of the interior of Buckingham Palace (as if we all live like that). Big Ben and the Thames at sunset, etc."

Later in the same letter she writes: "Monday afternoon. Over 100 people were already there. They let in six people every three-quarters of an hour. In the end I jumped over the barricade with Marsha following and forced my way in with the aid of my passport and angry words. Many people had been queuing since Friday evening, and so there was a lot of shouting, particularly as no one paid attention to who had got there first."

"Once inside we had to queue for ages to fill in forms, then found out that we didn't have enough roubles to pay for the visa application (regardless of whether you get one or not). Luckily, I found an English woman who gave us the money in exchange for my cheque. Then we had to wait again to be interviewed. By this time it was 12.30."

"Eventually we were called up. The interviewer (English) was incredibly rude to us, ignored me, and just said 'Your mother lives in England. I'll have to send you for a more detailed interview on Thursday afternoon.'"

My recent visa to Russia cost £10 and was arranged by post. I understand the charge made for a visa at the British embassy in Moscow is the equivalent of £30.

ANTHONY FURNESS
London N8

Found: men who do visit their GP

Sir: General practice remuneration is a bizarre system, and in fact 60 per cent of men are unregistered and register this year the effect will not be to give us increased income with which to treat the increased numbers (Letters, 14 and 17 June). What would actually happen would be that the Government would note the following year that the health service had paid more to GPs than it had planned, and reduce fees to reclaim the money in the following year.

However, the balance of male and female patients in my practice, and in those others I know of, is sufficiently close to 50:50 that the idea of a large unregistered and unregulated pool of men seems highly unlikely. Most of them rely on their wives or mothers to remember the name of their doctor for them, and indeed have commonly been registered along with the rest of the family.

Dr A K MIDGLEY
Exeter

essay

Untangling marriage

After all the moral handwringing, divorce will be a different affair now the Commons has passed the Family Law Bill. Patricia Wynn Davies talks to a couple who have tried the changes Parliament thinks will help troubled relationships

Jeremy and Helen really tried to save their marriage. It was not the snap, throwaway decision that many imagine divorce involves. It was a slow, painstaking and painful process that took years, not weeks or months.

They have been through all the processes that Lord Mackay's Family Law Bill advocates for many thousands of others contemplating a break-up. They had marriage guidance counselling, plenty of it, they went through mediation, they came to grief at the hands of lawyers, they emerged at the end with a fierce resolve to do no more damage to their children. The story of Helen and Jeremy spotlights the reality of what future divorcing couples might face.

"We had a lot of marriage guidance counselling," says Helen. "We had exhausted all the avenues." Eventually, after 15 years of marriage, they reached a joint decision that it had, to quote the existing law and the new, irretrievably broken down.

"It wasn't as though we were constantly fighting," said Jeremy. "We decided together 'We can't make it work now.'"

They had been to Relate and gone through a series of counselling sessions. There is a three-month "quarantine" period in the Bill in which couples can explore counselling but must desist from getting on with anything else to do with the divorce – the next best thing to being given compulsory marriage guidance. But, as this couple's experience shows, many people have already explored the marriage guidance avenue long before they seek a divorce. Thus, say some critics, the three-month "stand-off" period may prove to be counter-productive, perhaps even damaging to families where children desperately need a new settled way of life.

Jeremy and Helen, who had tried counselling at a much earlier stage in their marriage, are proof that some couples do

try very hard to save their marriages. But trying to become reconciled is as much as can be expected, and no amount of protracted discussion by policy-makers, still less party politicians, will ever alter that.

In Helen and Jeremy's case, nobody else was involved. The root of the problem lay in a lack of communication, exacerbated by Jeremy's refusal to go back to a full-time salaried job in medicine. After a business venture failed, leaving the family with huge debts, he combined work as a locum with a consultancy for international companies.

"We never learnt to communicate through disagreement," he says now.

Their decision finally to split up had been gestating over a period of years – not at the breakneck speed some MPs appear to consider is the norm – but none the less they ended up getting a divorce on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour. They got their decree absolute a few days ago.

They had begun by consulting a lawyer friend, who advised them that this was the quickest way to bring about a conclusion to a long-drawn-out and painful process. Under the existing law, the alternative would have been to separate for two years. Under the new Bill, because their children are under 16, they would have to wait 18 months: three months for "reconciliation" and a further 15-month period of "reflection and consideration".

Their decision, once it had been reached, to get it over with is the sort of experience that has prompted some family lawyers to warn that the 18-month cooling off period required by the Bill could have the opposite effect to the one intended, with people jumping on to the counselling-waiting-mediating-divorce rollercoaster at an earlier stage than they might otherwise have done.

As it was, someone had to present the petition, which Helen duly complied through



the lawyer. "I would rather not have had to apportion blame. It is a sordid business. And when you list the items, they sound incredibly petty. There is no way that anybody from outside can judge."

The lawyer friend, she adds, had emphasised that it was, frankly, irrelevant whether the finger of blame was pointed at her or at Jeremy. "I glanced at the petition once," says Jeremy. There was never any question of a counter-claim of competing allegations. That this fiction is now to be removed from the law – by the introduction of "no

fault divorce" – was and remains, despite the political machinations, a fundamental plank of the Bill.

The more pressing question is none the less whether the Bill can live up to claims that the mediation (resolution through a trained third party) of disputes, rather than resorting to an acrimonious exchange of solicitors' letters and, worse, court hearings and court orders, will convert some of the hostility and bitterness into constructive discussion about the future.

There is no compulsion as such to use mediation, although a growing number of couples are doing so even under existing law. Mediation might also persuade a few more couples to stick together, and it does help to prevent divorce being so acrimonious.

Nobody, however, should imagine that the process can somehow be anxiety-free. Jeremy and Helen had been to marriage guidance, but all the old feelings of sadness and disappointment still came flooding back. Helen recalls feeling emotionally overwhelmed on their first meeting with a medi-

ator. "It was because of the recognition that things had broken down irretrievably," she says. But she feels mediation – the couple had a series of sessions while they were still living together in the same house – was the key to handling the really difficult issues, such as telling the children, who are now aged nine and seven.

"We did not have very many friends who were divorced. We

'I would rather not have had to apportion blame. It is a sordid business'

had nobody to turn to for advice on how to say these things. While mediators do not tell you how to do it, it did give us the confidence to know what we were going to say."

The floods of tears from the children duly came, and Samuel, their seven-year-old, would still like Jeremy and Helen to live in separate flats, "one for mummy and one for daddy, one above the other".

While stable at the moment, the family's emotional future is unknowable. But Jeremy and Helen at least had no difficulty

in reaching agreement about caring for the children. Helen, a junior school teacher, has primary care. The children stay with Jeremy one night a week and on alternate weekends, while their parents babysit for each other on evenings out.

"Helen would like me to see more of them. But we consult our diaries at the beginning of each month and try to work it out," says Jeremy, as he gives

sorting out the finances took a turn for the worse when solicitors became involved. The hostility and distrust that he felt they had managed to keep under control was reintroduced. He feels the outline agreement that had been reached during mediation was unstitched in the nine months after Helen sought legal advice. The issue was the familiar one of the extent of Jeremy's earnings as a self-employed person. Helen concedes that it is this episode that has left Jeremy feeling particularly raw. "I know he feels a great deal more negative about that than I do," she says.

For her part, she was grappling with the dilemma of signing an agreement at a time when trust and respect had gone. But, she emphasises: "The mediators were very clear that I needed to seek legal advice because it wasn't straightforward."

Jeremy believes that she saw a solicitor too soon. While the mediation sessions came to £500, he spent a further £1,500 in solicitors' fees.

Eventually, the "clean break" was achieved – Helen got the house and maintenance

for the children and no further call on Jeremy's assets for herself. They are resolved to avoid unhappiness for their children at all costs. But the tangle over the financial settlement left Jeremy soured. "The family is several thousand pounds the poorer," he says.

The Bill is in a sense unique in the way that it promotes the institution of marriage while also trying to make the best fist it can of divorce. So do Helen and Jeremy, at the end of a lengthy period of counselling, mediation and then divorce, still, as Lord Mackay would like, believe in marriage?

Neither seems in any doubt about still supporting marriage and both, cautiously, hope to marry again – but better prepared than last time, when they were 23 and 24. They are older and wiser.

Says Helen: "I am still convinced that marriage is a worthwhile thing. There are couples who are happier together in 15 or 18 years than when they first married. I was very happy within my parents' marriage. For me it is still an ideal. There needs to be more help before marriage. Lack of communication was our big problem. I think we had very high expectations of one another."

Helen and Jeremy are a couple who tried hard, a million miles removed from the divorce-at-will stereotype portrayed by so many MPs, some of them divorcees, during the passage of the Bill. The new legislation has taken no chances by ensuring that most divorces will take longer to accomplish and that it will be much more difficult to embark on a second marriage without dealing properly with the aftermath of the first.

There will be lots more information (information sessions are the only mandatory aspect) and much more forceful reminders of parents' responsibilities for the welfare and feelings of their children, perhaps a lot more counselling and probably a lot more mediation, with often good and sometimes not so good results.

But when breakdown comes for the many who are just like Jeremy and Helen, to dispute whether the new law makes divorce "harder" or "easier" is to miss the point. The truth is that ending a marriage is difficult and daunting, not neat and tidy and mechanistic. The Bill has pitfalls, but at least the law has matured enough to reconcile a belief in marriage with today's social realities.

Some of the names in this article have been changed.

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Pepys doesn't know what he's missing

"Dear RUDEE" writes Maggy Higgs. "Your wheeze to let the readers do the writing while the 'writer' cashes the cheque deserves top marks for something. Choose: Ingenuity... cheek... efficiency... the reader-fee-good factor." Good grief, woman, has it completely escaped your attention that the workers who get paid most are those who delegate? I sit here listening to the merry hum of my fax machine and making crucial decisions about what emerges. I am editor and managing director of this column: I only wish the cheque reflected my importance.

"She was only a sausage-maker's daughter has inspired Mike Bradshaw to: 'But she curst every worst that she burst' and John Hobson to: 'But she knew her Long Johns from her Franks'."

Sebastian Robinson struck a chord with: 'Sadly they trudge round the Royal Academy'.

All the good bourgeois, for Culture editors. Yearning for Art to be representative. Who do they end up with? Damien Hirst.

I was given a sharp rap over the knuckles by a Hirstophile after being rude last year about the Turner shortlist so I wish it to be known that I try – God knows I try – to keep an open mind. Only the other day, finding myself in St James's with time on my hands, I applied myself to two extremely modern exhibitions. The first – to be found at the Economist Tower – is called "2 seconds 9 months", for, as the artist, Maria Marshall, explains, "An ejaculation of 2 seconds is sufficient to provide enough sperm to fertilise an egg; 9 months is self-explanatory."

Quite. The visual bit is OK, if you fancy a metaphor in the shape of a vast wooden-slat pyramid housing baby pine trees, but what really grabbed my attention was Ms Marshall's diary of her preg-

nancy – complete with doctor's commentary. Now I'm well-up on boring diaries. When writing the history of *The Economist* I had to skim 60 years of the fantastically dull journal of one Eliza Bagehot, daughter of the paper's founder and wife of Walter, the third editor. A typical entry read "Got up late as had bad headache. Lady Radice called and told me Mrs Midget was unwell. Zoe read part of Mr Gladstone's speech to me pm."

Then last year, when I wrote a crime novel about a fox-hunting bill, I had to bone up on hight diaries that made Eliza seem Pepys-like by comparison. I still keep instruc-



Ruth Dudley Edwards

tions from an Edwardian autobiography. "In it should be noted the bounds he hunts with, the meets he attends, the distance to them, the weather, the directions of the wind, a concise account of the day's sport, and any noteworthy incident in it... does not the soldier's art consist of order, simplicity and clearness?"

So does Ms Marshall's. And though more selective than the Antipodean who was in the news recently for keeping a record of every single event in his life, from the few pages I could see she appears to omit no detail, however slight, relating to her pregnancy. Where she goes further than Eliza, hunt diarists or the Antipodean is in selling it for £350 plus VAT in a limited edition of 29.

I proceeded to the ICA and found Chapmanworld, an exhibition consisting mainly of pairs of child-like mannequins fused together in interesting places and naked except for their trainers. Upstairs a skeleton mannequin suspended from the

ceiling dripped copious amounts of red fluid into a bucket: on the wall was a notice disclaiming responsibility for damage caused to clothing by splashes of blood. I did not sign up for the workshop, exploring through discussion and practical experiment the Chapman use of distorted focus. OK, OK, so I'm bourgeois.

Improbability of the week: A marathon reading of *Ulysses* on Sunday at the James Joyce Centre in Dublin was kicked off by Jeffrey Archer. Which leads me neatly into the ICA postcard of the day with its Molly Bloom overtones. Jacky Fleming draws one woman saying to another: "then he said why was I always trying to CHANGE him and I said probably because he's such an obnoxious thoughtless selfish overbearing self-righteous hypocritical arrogant loud-mouthered misogynist bastard..."

My fax number is 0181 932 4829 – not 4629.

Miles Kingston is back next week.

سكنا من الامل

the commentators

Shreds of hope remain among the shards of glass

The push for peace came from within Northern Ireland, and we owe it to them to keep going

So was it wrong to give Gerry Adams the benefit of so many doubts? Does it turn out that, in the end, the wolfish smile and tweed jackets were only light disguise for the wolfman of West Belfast? Once IRA, always IRA? Are those who always mocked the peace process as a republican fraud to be congratulated? And are the peacemakers to be cursed as naive?

Five question-marks in the first paragraph is going it a bit - but feels about right for this week. In London and Belfast, the mood among the politicians I talked to yesterday is desperately darker than at any time since the original ceasefire. There are warnings of carnage to come and political seizure. In Washington and Dublin, many of those who feted Gerry Adams feel sick and betrayed - and, no doubt, more than a little foolish.

And certainly, if you deal with the IRA, you are playing a dangerous game. It may be that there are people in its army council who truly believe that they can continue the peace process with a little judicious

bombing - murder the odd Asian shopkeeper in Canary Wharf if you think London ministers are dragging their heels; strew devastation across central Manchester when Adams is excluded from the talks. And so on.

There will be so-called strategists who think that all-party talks can be kick-started, or rather, bomb-started. And after that, when there is a little trouble with the chairman of the sub-committee on electoral systems, or whatever, they can always kill some Liverpoolian commuters, or main a granny in Bristol, to jolly things along.

This black comedy of a political strategy was, no doubt, given some sustenance by the decision to forge ahead with talks after the first London bombings. But somehow, a second round of attacks changes things entirely. It makes explicit the threat held over the political process in a way which democrats can neither evade nor tolerate.

It may also summon a savage

response. Unionist politicians are warning privately that loyalist killers will produce some kind of foul "spectacular" if the IRA has really (as they think) returned to war. Then Northern Ireland would slide back - except that, because of the bottled-up frustration of assorted maniacs, things would be even worse.

The pessimists believe this is bound to happen eventually. Some, like Conor Cruise O'Brien, expected it a year ago, and drew detailed word-pictures of how the mayhem would creep back as it became clear that the north would not be forced into a united Ireland. Others went silent, and waited. A few politicians, such as Norman Lamont, warned publicly that the peace process was embroiling the British government in appeasement. But no one wanted to hear them.

If the worst now happens, then lessons will be drawn. It will be said that one should never parley with



ANDREW MARR

The moderates could still design a new political process

terrorists; as many in Israel believe too. Next, it will be said that the Irish situation is hopeless - that it has been hopeless since the first dour Presbyterian squire ran Catholic peasants off barley fields, and that it will always be hopeless. Finally, some Tory rightwingers will say that

the whole sorry episode shows up Major yet again as a glib and rather weak politician, dangerously eager for liberal applause.

Each of these lessons should be refused. It is nonsense to say that one shouldn't ever listen to terrorists; unless you are prepared to, you'll never know when a terrorist is becoming an ex-terrorist. You have to keep trying. It's the burden of democracies to hold out the hand - even if the hand is sometimes bitten off.

To say that the Northern Irish problem is hopeless may sound judicious and worldly-wise from the safe distance of London clubland, but it mentally condemns many thousands of bright, fresh-faced and cheerful fellow citizens to an early death, or to maiming, or bereavement. It wasn't a handful of liberal journalists and naive leaders from outside the province who championed the peace process; it came from within Northern Ireland itself and is desperately wanted by hun-

dreds of thousands of ordinary, apolitical people, many of whom were brought up to hate one another and are now learning new ways.

Major's involvement, sometimes imaginative, sometimes stubborn, wasn't the result of his naivete or his lust for applause, but of a certain openness and courage. He could never move far without the Unionists - not merely because of the parliamentary constraints, but because without them there could be no settlement. In the event, Major took them further than they thought they'd ever go.

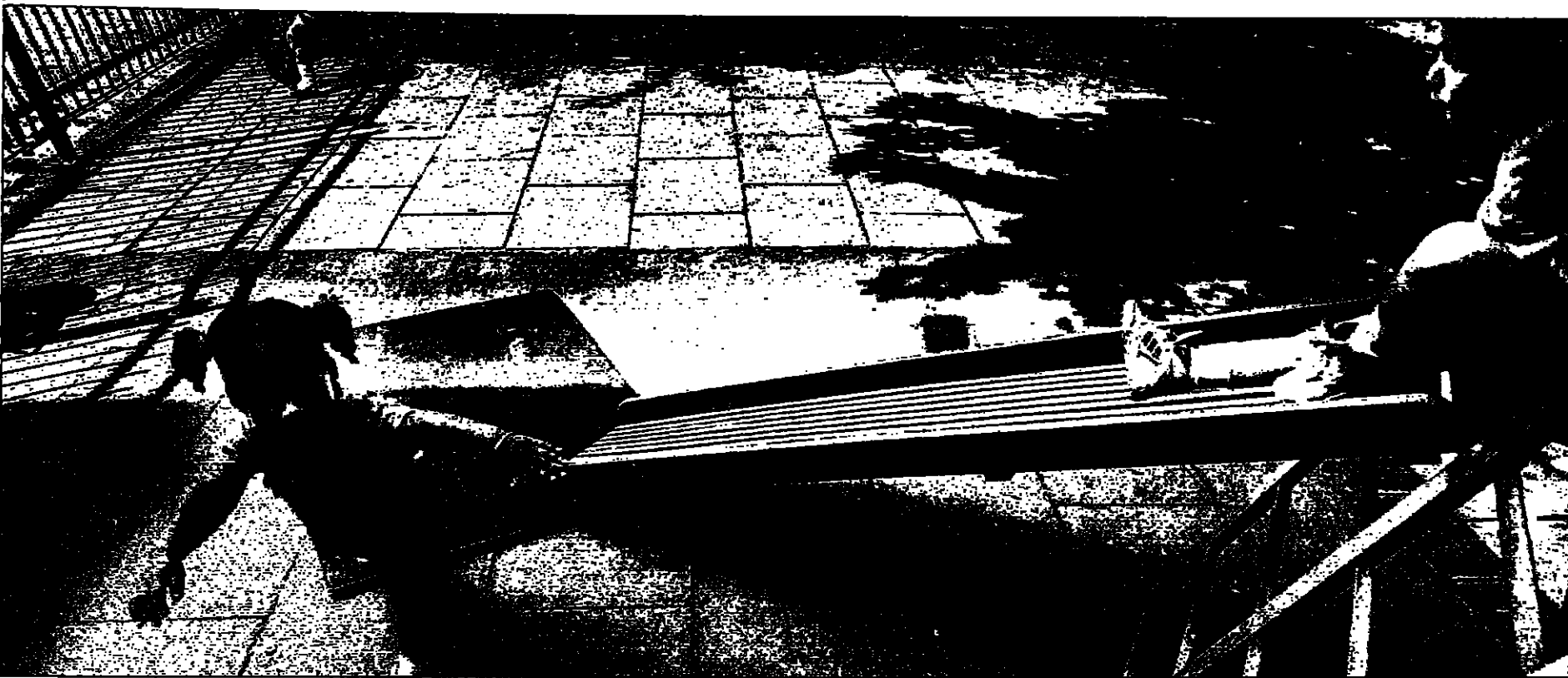
As his European beef war gets bogged down, and as his party continues to crumble, the crutching off track of the peace process is a blow to Major's standing - and surely, if he's flesh and blood, to his morale. But if he is voted out, then Tony Blair will have to go back and pick up his pieces. Trying to draw in Adams and Sinn Féin was a necessary gamble. If it hasn't paid off, someone will have to try a similar

gamble with someone else in a few years' time.

Even now, there are shreds of hope. If Adams splits the republican movement and stands aside from the IRA, then the core of violent republicanism will be reduced. Many more people voted for him in the recent elections than can stomach a return to bombs and bullets. It is, I agree, unlikely that he will disown the bloody romanticism of his own past, but anything is possible.

Even if that doesn't happen then David Trimble - now in the strongest position of any Unionist leader for decades - and John Hume, and the rest of the moderates, can still work together and design a new political process for the province. They are changing themselves and by changing themselves, are changing the political weather there too.

No miracle has happened. So the path to a better Northern Ireland proves slippery, winding and treacherous. But the peacemakers, if not blessed, have to hold together and keep walking it. There is no other way.



Child's play: but unlike many other European countries, the UK has failed to establish a solid, high-quality education system for its under-fives

Photograph: Edward Sykes

Even a child could do it better

Britain has uniquely failed to provide enough nurseries. Fran Abrams assesses latest efforts to solve the problem

Belgians do it. The French do it. Even educated Swedes do it. But try as they might, the British just cannot organise a decent nursery-education system.

Yet again, our attempts to educate our under-fives properly have landed us in the soup. Ministers were hoping their nursery voucher scheme, due to go national in April 1997, would turn out to be a vote-winner, but the House of Lords seemed to have other ideas, and voted to delay implementation until the full results of a pilot scheme in four areas are known - in effect until after the general election.

While other European nations provide nursery places for almost all their three- and four-year-olds, we still have room for only two thirds of ours. And many of those are in overcrowded primary-school reception classes, playgroups or day nurseries, which may not offer much in the way of education.

And this parlous state of affairs has not come about for lack of trying, either. Successive governments have talked about a universal nursery education since Margaret Thatcher first promised it back in the early Seventies, when she was education secretary.

Just one thing is certain: parents want this to happen. In France, where there are places available for all three-

year-olds, 98 per cent of parents take them up. Even parents in the four "phase one" voucher areas have welcomed the initiative, which gives them £1,100 to spend in a state or private school, or in a playgroup. A survey published this month by the preschool learning alliance showed that 80 per cent of playgroups felt parents were happy with the vouchers.

Parents who previously had to pay for nursery places benefit most. Among them is Carmel Carolan, a single mother whose son, Dean, has been going to the Imps playgroup in Westminster for almost two years.

Until this April, Mrs Carolan had to pay £5.50 per week out of her benefit for Dean, but now his place is free. With a rise in fees coming, she doubts that she would have been able to continue taking him each afternoon without a voucher. There are many other single mothers at the group who are similarly pleased, she says.

"Under the voucher scheme they have to start teaching them things. It's definitely made a difference - Dean's learning so much more. He's learnt how to spell his name and he's mem-

orised lots of telephone numbers. Every time I come out of the bathroom he's on the phone talking to his grandfather," she said.

But the delight of Mrs Carolan and her fellow parents should not lead ministers to indulge in any premature triumphalism. If, as Gillian Shepherd hinted yesterday, the Government overturns the Lords' decision and presses on, the national launch next April could be a ghastly mess.

The fact that the pilot scheme in Westminster, Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea and Norfolk has been a moderate success is not in the least bit surprising. Parents are happy with the programme because ministers have made concessions to ensure nothing goes wrong. Mrs Carolan's voucher only pays for the full cost of Dean's place because the Government gave in to protests and abandoned plans to give playgroups only half the £1,100 value for each child.

There have been many other instances of almost staggering flexibility. Not enough nursery places for all Norfolk's four-year-olds? Hey presto, Gillian Shepherd promises 16

new local-authority nursery units. Grumbles from Wandsworth about having to educate voucher-less four-year-olds from neighbouring boroughs? Lo and behold, almost £500,000 extra cash is provided, allegedly to compensate the council. Demands from all four authorities to redeem the vouchers through their local management of schools funding, giving them effective control of the scheme? No problem.

Next year things will be different. With every authority in the country involved, there will not be funds for hand-outs all round. The schools minister, Robin Squire, has admitted that there may not be enough places to go round, either. Without incentives for private firms to build new nurseries, the net result will be that some four-year-olds will be crammed into primary-school reception classes, while others sit at home.

Even worse, there could be horror stories about dangerous, badly run private nurseries operating on vouchers. With inspectors unable to visit all 16,000 providers for up to a year, cowboy operators could cause panic.

What most parents are looking for is a safe, stimulating nursery, which is open at hours that enable them to go to work. But it is possible that some private nurseries may not be safe. An overcrowded reception class with 35 children is not likely to be stimulating enough. And a voucher that pays for five half-days each week may only serve to complicate rather than ease child-care arrangements.

If things do go wrong, they could do so in spectacular fashion. Imagine the horror in Downing Street, if it comes before a general election, it becomes clear that thousands of parents have vouchers but no nursery places.

Nursery education may not prove much of a winner for Labour, either. The opposition has committed itself to high-quality nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds, but it has not committed itself to the huge injection of public funds that may be needed. Instead, it has relied on the hope that the public-private partnerships can provide the necessary capital investment.

The problem with nursery education in the UK is that we put it in the same category as apple pie. It is a Good Thing, but it has never been at the top of our list. In the immortal words of the song, what we should be saying is "Let's do it."

Twigging the need for etiquette

A snack attack should be indulged in style. Pandora Melly gets crisp

My legal friend X (not his real name) is in another of his horrible moods. He rings to rant about the helpful hints on packets of Twiglets. Apparently, you lay a blue paper napkin across a plate, and then simply "toss" the Twiglets across it in casual log-jam formation. It says "serving suggestion" below the photograph.

"Why, for God's sake?" asks X. "Do they think we're complete fools?" He cuts across my explanation of the Trades Descriptions Act to complain about KettleMaster's chips: "Hand-cooked, indeed! It's a bloody machine - read between the lines." I'm sure he has a point. As a fledgling barrister, he no doubt experienced the attentions of a PupilMaster.

Mrs Bartlett produces a blue napkin and spreads it on the gentlemen's toiletries counter. Prising open the packet, she deftly flicks the chips. The Twiglets have landed in a graceful curve across the counter. A little crowd of interested shoppers has gathered to learn: "The key lies in the wrist action." The Bartlett sleeve is pulled up an inch and the manoeuvre repeated for late-comers - a McEnroe-esque back-hand with a touch of topspin.

It is exactly like the "serving suggestion" on the packet. Mrs B nods modestly. At her time of life, a little consultancy work ekes out a pension, she explains.

and looking like Dirk Bogarde in the last throes of *Death in Venice*. We elbow our way into the Food Hall and hook an industrial-sized pack of Twiglets.

She tells me about her hotline to "a very nice young man at the local library". She had stood over him as he hacked into the Institute of Directors' database, fed "Twiglets" into one end and waited to see what galvanising information it disclosed. "Grey of original Twiglet packaging invests product with dullness." "In public trials, taste of Twiglets described by some respondents as 'a bit Richard Gere'." and reams of stuff about exploiting the Japanese market with a Bonsai version.

"Which is why presentation is of paramount importance." Mrs Bartlett produces a blue napkin and spreads it on the gentlemen's toiletries counter. Prising open the packet, she deftly flicks the chips. The Twiglets have landed in a graceful curve across the counter. A little crowd of interested shoppers has gathered to learn: "The key lies in the wrist action." The Bartlett sleeve is pulled up an inch and the manoeuvre repeated for late-comers - a McEnroe-esque back-hand with a touch of topspin.

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Fischer makes an unprecedented move

After 500 years, the greatest of the grandmasters has changed the rules of chess, says William Hartston

For only the second time in a millennium, something is about to happen that promises to improve the quality of the leisure activities of tens of millions of people.

This afternoon, in La Plata, Argentina, Bobby Fischer will change the rules of chess. The last time the rules were altered significantly was in the 1490s, when the scope of the queen and bishop were considerably enhanced and modern chess was born out of a more tedious version that had then been around for 900 years.

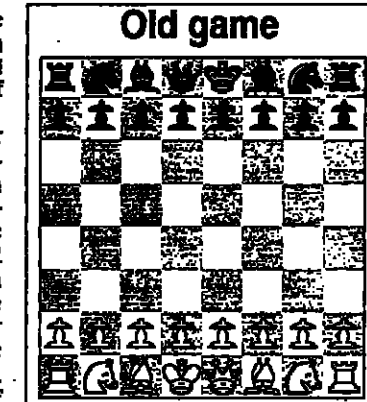
Bobby Fischer, 53, who won the world chess championship in 1972, has decided that while the rules were adequate for half a millennium, they now need a little tinkering with. His proposal, to be launched today as a new game called "Fischerandom Chess" is to dispense with the conventional placing of the pieces at the beginning of a game, instead shuffling the kings, queens and rooks at random among the squares they usually occupy.

After 500 years of intense study, the conventional starting position has

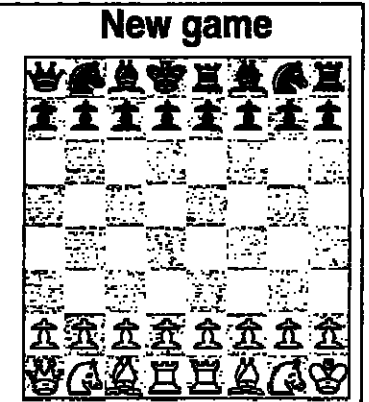
been over-analysed, he believes. The Fischer version would place an emphasis back on genuine skill and creativity rather than knowledge of opening variations.

The idea may have come to Fischer when he was preparing for his comeback match against Boris Spassky in 1992. After 20 years away from competitive chess, Fischer played some magnificently impressive games, but still seemed a little out of touch with modern theory. In his best years, he was always six months ahead of other grandmasters in his analysis of the most complex opening variations. When shaking off two decades of rust, however, he simply avoided anything fashionable in his openings.

There is no reason for the new game to catch on. "Improved" versions of chess are launched every few years - three-dimensional, hexagonal, or 100-square among others - but they have never succeeded in weaning the world's players away from their familiar territory. Yet the backing of Bobby Fischer could make all the difference.



For 20 years after winning the world championship, Fischer never pushed a pawn in competition. Indeed, his only known creative achievement was a pamphlet entitled *I was tortured in the Pasadena Jailhouse* - an account of his arrest on (totally unfounded) suspicion of a bank robbery. Yet the charisma of the name of Bobby Fischer is still highly potent. His match with Spassky in 1992 attracted a \$5m



purse - roughly three times the amount that the current champions, Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov, can command.

Walking out of tournaments, demanding larger pawns (or smaller squares) on his chessboards, even having his lavatory seats lowered to meet his demanding specifications, all Fischer's perfectionist traits helped to build his unique reputation. It also

helped to have been the strongest player who ever lived. And when he began his comeback match in 1992 by spitting on a letter from the US Internal Revenue Service, the legend of Bobby Fischer as modern American folk hero was perfected. The only trouble is that he can only return to America on penalty of arrest and a huge fine for "trading with the enemy" for his sanctions-busting crime of defying the IRS by competing in Yugoslavia.

Having beaten the Russians and confounded the Americans, Fischer is now taking up his most difficult challenge: the game of chess itself. And anyone doubting that the reclusive American can change the rules should take a look at the fortunes of US Patent Number 4,884,255; inventor Robert J. Fischer: the Bobby Fischer Chess Clock. The clock helps a player allocate his time sensibly and has been a runaway hit on the back of the Fischer name. Perhaps in another few years, we will all be doing the Bobby Fischer shuffle with our pieces at the start of each game too.

**Sir Fitzroy
Maclean Bt**

Photograph: Tom Pilstor

Fitzroy, Hew Maclean, diplomat, soldier, politician, writer: born Cairo 11 March 1911; MP (Conservative) for Lancaster 1941-59. For Buile and North Ayrshire 1959-74; CBE (mil) 1944; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War 1954-57; Bt 1957; KRT 1993; married the Hon Mrs (Veronica) Phipps (née Fraser, two sons); died 15 June 1996.

R. E. Pardee
 William Hughes, printer; born
 Hammerwich, Staffordshire 20
 September 1912; married 1937
 Nora Lock (one son); died
 Worcester 21 May 1996.

The Court agreed with the proposition that "where deprivation of liberty was taken, the interests of justice in principle called for legal representation. In this case, Mr Benham ended a maximum term of three months' imprisonment. Furthermore, the law which the justices had to apply was not straightforward. The test for culpable negligence in particular was difficult to understand and operate, as shown by the fact that, in the Divisional Court, the justices' finding could not be sustained on the evidence. Under neither the Green nor the Abwbor schemes did Mr Benham stand as of right to be represented. In all these circumstances, the interests of justice demanded that, in order to receive a fair hearing, Mr Benham ought to have had free legal representation during the proceedings before the justices. It followed that there had been a denial of article 6.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

صبرنا من الامل

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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

£3bn borrowing surge dampens tax hopes

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The Chancellor's scope for responsible tax cuts in the next Budget shrunk even further yesterday with the news that government borrowing was £3.2bn more than its income last month. Without £1.1bn in privatisation revenue from the sale of Railtrack the gap in the Government's finances would have widened even wider.

Adam Coyle, an economist at brokers James Capel, said it left Kenneth Clarke, with only one policy lever to pull ahead of the

election - lower base rates. In his Mansion House speech last week the Chancellor insisted that bringing the government budget into balance in the medium term was a key policy aim, and he would make sure it was achieved.

But the City was disappointed by yesterday's figures, which showed borrowing adjusted for privatisation receipts was higher in the first two months of this financial year than at the same stage last year.

Andrew Smith, shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, said the figures called into question

the Chancellor's claim that public borrowing was on a downward trend.

Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman Malcolm Bruce said: "It is clear the Government is heading for another blow-out on borrowing this year."

Mr Clarke is expected to adjust upwards his target for the public sector borrowing requirement when the Treasury publishes its new economic forecast next month.

City experts think the total for 1996/97 could be up to £8bn higher than the current target of £22.4bn.

That would mean very little shrinkage compared with last year's PSBR of £32.2bn, itself £3bn higher than the target set last November.

The reason for their scepticism is the toughness of the expenditure plans. The Government has successfully held spending to its ambitious targets for the past three years, and has an increase of only 1.2 per cent planned this financial year. If this is achieved it would mean a reduction in real terms.

Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist at NatWest Markets, believes a cut in real expenditure

is "near-impossible in a pre-election year".

Departmental spending grew 3.3 per cent in the year to May, down from April's 7.3 per cent increase but well above the target. Much of the over-run in the first two months of the financial year has been on the social security budget rather than across all departments, and it is probably too early to conclude that the pattern has been set for the year as a whole.

"The slowdown in spending growth in May is encouraging, but it will need to be maintained in the months ahead," Jonathan

Loyne, an economist at HSBC Markets, said.

After the concern about "missing" tax revenues towards the end of the last financial year, their growth has now started to overshoot the Treasury forecasts. Government receipts were 6.7 per cent higher in the year to May despite a 5 per cent fall in income tax revenues.

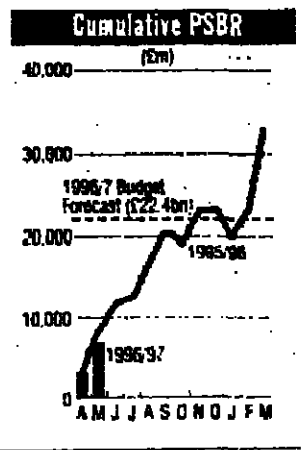
A combination of high income tax receipts last May and this year's tax cuts probably explains the drop.

VAT receipts, fingered as one of the main culprits for last year's shortfall, were up 16 per

cent. However, revenue from corporation tax, the other problem area in 1995/96, was flat.

The headline PSBR in May was exaggerated by an unexpectedly small repayment of borrowing by local authorities. They were in surplus by only £100m this May, £500m less than a year ago. Local authority reorganisation might explain why they spent more early in the financial year. As local authority borrowing is more or less capped over the year as a whole, this disappointment will be reversed later on.

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Sumitomo faces fresh claims it knew of losses

PETER RODGERS,
DAVID USBORNE
and RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

Evidence mounted yesterday that a number of senior officials at Sumitomo Corporation may have known for some time of loss-making trading accounts operated by the disgraced trader Yasuo Hamanaka, as US law officials began a criminal investigation into the \$1.8bn case.

The US Attorney's office in New York opened a formal grand jury investigation to search for links between Mr Hamanaka and copper trading firms in the US.

Mr Sloan confirmed that Global was a large buyer and seller of copper on behalf of Sumitomo and it also acted as a broker, using accounts at Merrill Lynch and Rudolf Wolff in London, maintained in Sumitomo's name for hedging the Japanese giant's copper exposure.

Sumitomo has declared that Mr Hamanaka authorised these accounts by himself, against company rules, and there have been reports that they were secret devices operated as part of Mr Hamanaka's fraudulent schemes.

(CFTC), which is the main federal body that oversees commodities trading in the US. Amongst firms it is believed to be reviewing is Winchester Commodities of the UK.

In a statement confirming his probe, John Tull, acting chairman of the CFTC said: "In order to restore the confidence necessary for this market... I have directed the commission staff to examine any and all relationships, financial or otherwise, between Sumitomo and any of the business concerns whose identities have surfaced or will surface in the course of the

senior management, including the Sumitomo president, Tomiichi Akiyama, might resign, and limited that a proposed buy-up of the corporation's own shares, scheduled for a general shareholders' meeting on 27 June, was now in jeopardy.

He added that the corporation would "thoroughly reinforce our internal control system," although he failed to explain how this might be achieved.

In a further unsuccessful attempt at damage limitation, Sumitomo gave a private briefing to securities analysts from major brokerages to answer questions about Mr Hamanaka's losses. "They were trying to reassure us, but in my case it had the opposite effect since they were able to answer so few of our questions," said Paula Sugawara of Lehman Bros. "I still think there's a lot of bad news yet to come out. To be running up those kinds of losses and the company not to know seems incredible."



Facing the music: There are growing doubts about the future of Tomiichi Akiyama (centre), the Sumitomo president

"The corporation was trying to reassure us but it had the opposite effect since they could answer so few questions"

Sumitomo said specifically on Monday that the Global accounts operated in its name were not authorised.

But both Global and Merrill said the brokerage accounts were properly authorised by Sumitomo at a level senior to Mr Hamanaka.

Mr Sloane said Global expected to be able shortly to publish documentary evidence of this claim. Rudolf Wolff refused to comment.

Simultaneously, details also surfaced of a parallel civil inquiry by the Commodities Futures Trading Commission,

commission's surveillance of the copper market."

In Japan, Sumitomo's vice-president, Mutsumi Hashimoto, gave an evasive performance, refusing to comment on reports linking Mr Hamanaka's copper trades with Global Minerals and Metals. Global, founded in 1993, is reported to have had close ties with Sumitomo to the extent that the securities house even offered to invest as much as \$3m to fund its creation.

Mr Hashimoto also left open the possibility that Sumitomo may sue Mr Hamanaka and that

left the family home in Kawasaki, near Tokyo, late last week for an unknown destination. Sumitomo claims to have no knowledge of his whereabouts.

In London, Winchester Commodities Group said it "vehemently denies" responsibility for any Sumitomo losses.

Sumitomo, a significant end-

user of copper, has an interest in controlling its price, both to obtain the metal cheaply and to ensure that its future supply is obtained at stable prices. Mr Hamanaka's job was to deliver this supply to his employers and, where possible, to make any additional profits for the company from his dealing.

The rationale used by Mr Hamanaka in 1993, which ran contrary to market expectations, was that supply of copper

would lag behind demand for it in the short term and over a period of years. Although he denied rigging the market, some dealers suspected his comments indirectly explained the logic of Sumitomo's activities.

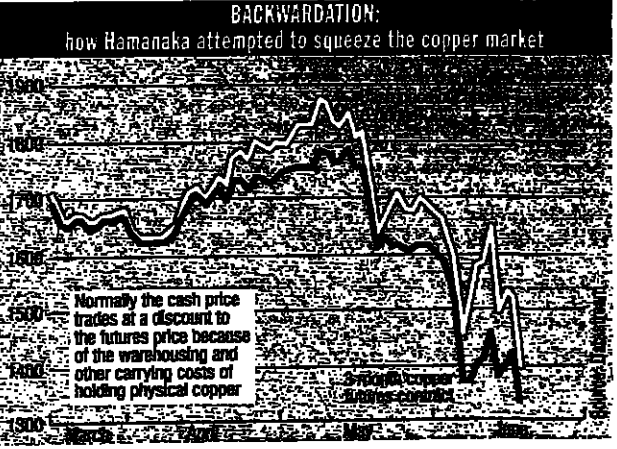
It is likely that over the past three years, not all of Mr Hamanaka's deals turned sour on him. In 1994, copper prices rose to about £2,000 a tonne.

But by the beginning of this year, his insistence that de-

mand would outstrip supply, thereby driving up prices, led him to engage in deals in which he repeatedly aimed to make a profit from a rise he was hoping to engineer. As the graph shows, backwardation rose between March and May, reaching a peak earlier this month.

By contrast, a number of US hedge funds, including one headed by George Soros and the Tudor Fund, bet against him that the market would fall.

Nymex, the New York energy and metals market, has been campaigning for tighter regulation of the London Metal Exchange since well before the Sumitomo crisis emerged, because of concerns that problems could spill over into the US.



Hamanaka cornered by betting against the market

NIC CICUTTI

By the time Sumitomo Corporation was forced to admit the scale of its huge losses at the hands of Yasuo Hamanaka, most back-street scrap metal merchants already knew who he was and what he was up to.

Their trade magazines had long been writing about the activities of "Mr Five Per Cent", the man able to determine the helter-skelter prices of the used

copper pipes and boilers they dealt in since at least 1993.

The attention of the London Metal Exchange, the premier world metals market, had been drawn three years ago to a significant squeeze taking place in the availability of copper.

In essence, the cash price of copper - available at two days' notice - was higher than three-month futures contracts for the same metal, a process known as "backwardation".

This is seen as unusual because the futures price takes into account the additional cost of warehousing, insurance and the use to which the money employed to buy copper might be put instead.

The conclusion reached by many brokers, including some who reportedly complained to the LME, was that Mr Hamanaka was involved in cornering the market for copper.

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Credit cards brush with NCC

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Customers who claim against their credit card companies when goods and services they bought are faulty or sub-standard are routinely being brushed aside and told to claim against the retailer, according to the National Consumer Council, the UK's official consumer watchdog.

It wants the Office of Fair Trading to reinforce the existing rules on joint and several liability which give the consumer equal right of redress against the credit card company and the supplier of the goods and services.

"At the moment, claimants are fobbed off unless they can quote the law and have the support of a consumer adviser," the NCC said yesterday in response to a Department of Trade Industry consultation document.

The NCC also wants to make sure that consumers are aware that they have an equal right of claim and has called on the OFT to ensure that credit card companies accept their responsibility to meet the full bill for claims, not just the amount paid by card.

The Credit Card Research Group, which represents virtually all the companies issuing

Mastercard and Visa cards in the UK, yesterday rejected the suggestion that it ignores widespread claims for faulty goods and sub-standard services.

It argues that 95 per cent of the 20,000 claims its members receive in an average year involve cases where the supplier has gone bankrupt, and the credit card company assumes liability.

Typically these are items such as holidays, furniture, computers and mail-order goods for which consumers pay in advance and await delivery.

In the remaining cases, the CCRG agrees card companies

will suggest that the first port of call should be the supplier of the goods. It also claims to have the agreement of the Office of Fair Trading and the Consumer Association that this is a logical way of proceeding.

However, the NCC says its evidence has come from trading standards officers and Citizens Advice bureaux. They believe that in many cases consumers are told to pursue the supplier through to the courts in an attempt to get justice, and are not reminded that under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act they have an equal right to claim against the card company.

Cowie drives away with British Bus in £302m deal

Cowie, the Sunderland-based motor dealer, is set to become Britain's third largest bus company following yesterday's £302m deal to acquire British Bus, writes Nigel Cope. The deal gives Cowie a 16 per cent share of the UK bus market.

It will also net British Bus founder Dawson Williams an estimated £10m. The company had been planning a flotation when details of a Serious Fraud Office enquiry into Mr Williams emerged last year.

Cowie will fund the deal through 1 for 3 rights issue priced at 35p, raising £186m.

Cowie will also take on British Bus' £100m of debt.

British Bus is strong in the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West, while Cowie's base is in north and south London.

Cowie chief executive Gordon Hodgson described the deal as "The last remaining opportunity for a strategic acquisition of an independent business in the UK bus industry." He said the company was still looking for other deals.

Last year, British Bus made operating profits of £34m on sales of £261m. Cowie shares closed 3p higher at 409p.

Greene King snaps up Magic

ROGER TRAPP

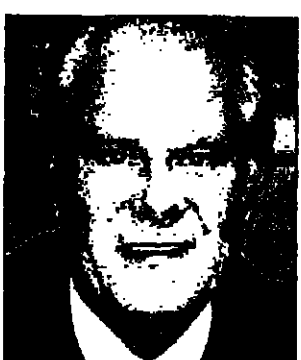
Michael Cannon has made a fortune for the second time in three years by selling his Magic Pub chain to Greene King for nearly £70m.

The deal, which Greene King will partly finance through a £90m rights issue, will more than double the East Anglian brewers' managed house estate to 462 out of a total of 1,139 pubs.

Mr Cannon, chairman of Magic Pub, is understood to have made about £70m from the deal. Managing director Philip Snook, finance director Tom Gill and the senior management team, who together owned 10 per cent of the company, also made a substantial amount, while much of the rest went to institutional investors led by CINVen.

Now in his mid-50s, Mr Cannon began in the leisure business as a Berni Inn chef and opened his first pub about 20 years ago in Bristol. An early venture, Cannon Inns, collapsed, but he later merged his other leisure interests into West Country pub chain Devonish.

Having fought off brewer Boddingtons in a bitter bid battle, he then sold Devonish to the pubs, drinks and hotel operator, Greenall's, in 1993 for more than £200m. His share of that was about £25m, of which about half



Michael Cannon: Made £70m from the pub sale

Magic Pub is centred on London and the South and operates in three divisions. The main pubs operation has 209 outlets, of which 200 are managed. They are free houses, but have arrangements with suppliers. In addition, 47 pub restaurants are grouped under the Hungry Horse name, while 21 hotels and inns operate as Countryside Inns.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3796.40	-5.10	-0.1	3857.10	3639.50
FTSE 250	4464.70	-7.50	-0.2	4568.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	1899.30	-2.80	-0.1	1945.40	1816.60
FT Small Cap	2238.00	-1.75	-0.1	2244.36	1954.06
FT All Share	1884.59	-2.82	-0.1	1924.17	1781.95
New York	5648.50	-6.28	-0.1	5778.00	5032.94
Tokyo	22332.40	+87.02	+0.4	22332.40	19734.70
Hong Kong	10582.78	+87.79	+0.8	11594.95	10204.87
Frankfurt	2549.29	+3.17	+0.1	2670.78	2253.36

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year
UK	5.72	6.13	6.10	6.11	6.24
US	5.47	6.03	6.68	6.17	7.05
Japan	0.47	0.93	3.28	2.85	-
Germany	2.50	3.68	5.61	6.88	7.19

MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Index	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)	Index	Price (p)
Brit Borneo Pils	553	20	3.6	Refuge Group	447
First Leisure Corp	269	11	4.1	Sunbeam	625
WPP Group	198	5	2.6	Carpetright	534

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
\$/£	1.5438	-0.15c	1.6035	£/¥	0.0478
\$/DM	1.5360	unch	1.6002	DM/£	0.6510
DM/¥	2.3884	-0.08p	2.2927	DM/£	1.5148
¥/£	168.87	+1.30p	136.58	¥/£	107.975
£/Ind	85.6	-0.2	84.3	£/Ind	99.7

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent	18.44	-0.03	18.73	RPI	152.9
Gold \$	385.30	+0.1	390.50	GDP	130.3
Gold £	248.57	+0.3	249.80	Base Rates	5.75pc

business

Carpetright rolls out the profits with right formula

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY NIGEL COPE

The share price reaction to Carpetright's results was similar to that regularly experienced by Next. A cracking set of results is met by a fall in the share price because the figures were not even better. True, the results were at the lower end of expectations but a 28 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £25.2m is not to be sniffed at. Most retailers would kill for a set of results such as these.

It is clear that Carpetright's chairman, the ever-ebullient Lord Harris of Peckham, has got his formula right: low prices, decent value and regular promotions to keep the customers interested.

Carpetright already has 12 per cent of the UK carpet market and the target of 30 per cent by the end of the decade looks achievable.

Like-for-like sales improved by a staggering 13 per cent last year and the trend has continued since the April year-end.

This is even more impressive when you consider that the overall market shrank by 4 per cent last year.

To bolster sales, Carpetright offered more special promotions, which shaved one percentage point off the margin, but that should be clawed back this year.

By the year-end Carpetright was trading out of 246 stores, including 200 of the core chain.

The start-up of the Premier Carpet concessions and the larger Carpet Depot formats cost £1.6m last year. A further 30 Premier Carpet concessions should open in the next 12 months, taking the total to 77.

Another 25 Carpet Depots will also open, taking the total to 102. The plan is for a nationwide network of 70. There must be some cannibalisation between the store formats, though Carpetright says not.

Lord Harris has ruled out a special dividend or share buy-back, preferring to use the £13m cash pile for store openings and a progressive dividend policy.

With only half its target market share figure in the UK, there is still plenty more to go for in the domestic market.

The forthcoming flotation of Allied Carpets will add to competition, though Carpetright says it will give the sector more visibility.

Investors who bought Carpetright shares when they floated at 148p three years ago have seen their investment rise fourfold.

With the shares down 29p to 594p yesterday and analysts fore-

casting profits of £36m this year, they are trading on a slightly more sensible forward rating of 18. Fair value.

Hazlewood to savour growth

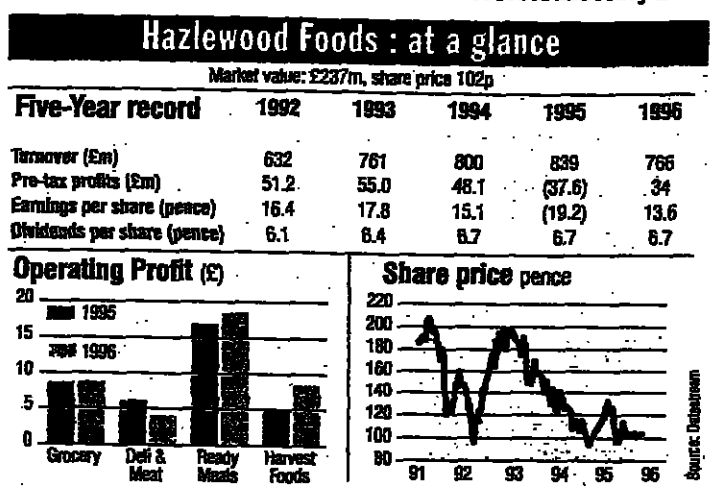
Things could be looking up for Hazlewood Foods, the mixed bag of food companies which includes ready-made meals and pork and potato production. The company sounded a long-awaited note of optimism yesterday. The feeling is that last year's nightmare of rising raw material prices and inability to pass on price increases to retailers is now easing.

If this is a recovery, it would not be before time. The shares have been an appalling investment, underperforming the market by 65 per cent in the last five years.

The company's problem has been a ragbag of often unrelated businesses that were too small to achieve market dominance. Management

have now sold volatile businesses such as shellfish and ice cream though the paper and nappy businesses have yet to be offloaded. But five or six years of restructuring is beginning to pay off. The company bounced back to profits of £34m in the year to March. This

compared with the previous year's £37m loss caused by restructuring provisions. More encouraging is the 4 per cent rise in like-for-like sales. Margins are also improving, rising from 4.9 per cent to 5.3 per cent. Price rises have started to stick. In convenience foods and ready-made



meals there is a push towards higher-value, higher-margin ranges.

Problem areas include the meat and deli business which is being hampered by rival Unigate's pork division. Profits fell by a third last year and the BSE scare will knock around £2m off the bottom line this year.

There is still an over-reliance on commodity businesses. And unlike most food groups, Hazlewood is moving closer towards the major supermarkets, which now account for 45 per cent of its business.

In the short term, Hazlewood should benefit from the more benign market conditions. But further out its exposure to supermarkets is still a worry. BZW is forecasting profits of £37m this year. With the shares unchanged at 102p, they trade on a forward multiple of nine. Hold.

First Leisure slow but sure

Investors who demand instant results should probably shy away from First Leisure, the kind of company for which the concept "medium-term" could have been invented. But patience is its own reward, and the company's careful, moderately

aggressive strategy looks as if it will bear fruit in time.

Pre-tax profits were up 5 per cent to £18m in the six months to April but stripping out asset disposals the figure was flat at £16.5m.

The National Lottery and scratch cards have taken their toll on discretionary spending, which affects all First Leisure's divisions such as bingo, bars and bowling. But compared with rival leisure companies, First Leisure has performed creditably. The company is hopeful that the drop in scratch card sales will free up more cash for spending on other leisure pursuits.

First Leisure has also made good use of its cash flow, expanding its Brannigan brand bars, its Riva "new style" bingo halls and its lucrative night clubs. All three areas are good profit centres, and the company has earmarked another £50m in the next 18 months to build even more sites.

Longer term, the company may want to sell non-core assets, such as the rather tired resorts at Blackpool. But for now at least, they throw off useful cash.

With analysts expecting full-year pre-tax profits of £13m the stock is on a multiple of 19 times, falling to 18 in 1997. The shares jumped 11p on the results to close at 369p. Hold.

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Rector makes small beer of ailing churches



Pious'hop: Rector plans to brew a mean ale for profit

Scottish & Newcastle and Bass had better watch out. A Sussex rector has floated his own brewery and he's got God on his side. Not that the Reverend Godfrey Broster of Plumpton Green has any very ambitious plans for expansion or acquisitions.

He has launched Rectory Ales to help cover the horrendous repair bill for the three churches in his parish - one Saxon, one 12th century and one 19th century. After all, he says, the main brewers before the Reformation in the 16th century were the monasteries.

Rather than pass the begging bowl around once again he has rounded up his parish flock and offered them 1,500 shares in Rectory Ales at £2 each, with a minimum subscription of £100 and a limit of £200.

"It's been over-subscribed," Mr Broster says proudly. "I got the idea from a prospectus for a flotation which I invested in myself."

He reckons brewing two or three barrels of traditional ales a week could generate profits of £1,000 in the first year. How about the dividend policy? "I hope to pay a dividend - I haven't said I won't - it all depends on trading. We'll have to wait and see."

Local pubs have agreed to take the strong Rector's Revenge (abv 5.4), Rector's Pleasure (abv 3.8) and Parson's Porter (abv 3.6). Any plans for lager? "Oh no, that needs cooling apparatus - you'd really have to go big for that. I do brew the odd stout on request, though." And the flotation's been done without without paying a penny in advisers' fees. A miracle.

A second-son from the Japanese version of the DTL, Miti, will soon be helping UK firms to develop more business - with Japan. Hideo Suzuki has started a two-year secondment to the DTL. Based in

the DTL's automotive directorate, he will work closely with the UK car industry to help build relationships with Japan and increase trade in the automotive sector - one of the DTL's target areas under the Action Japan campaign. No doubt Mr Suzuki will help to rev up the motor sector.

The *Dispatches* programme on Channel 4 tonight puts the boot into "the lucrative world of the liquidators - asking why hundreds of firms have been closed down, some perhaps unnecessarily - and exposing sharp practice among some smaller practitioners who engage in improper financial manoeuvring".

All fair enough, I suppose, but it does seem to be kicking a sector when it's down. The senior partner at one of the biggest insolvency firms told me gloomily on Monday that "the trend for company collapses in the UK is still down. It probably won't go up again until 1998. We're having to lay people off." Poor things.

What is it with the Bulgarian football team? Not their defeat last night at the hands of the French in Euro96, but their constant switching of hotels in the North-east, to local chagrin. First Scarborough council forked out £20,000 to put them up at a hotel, only for Hristo Stoichkov to decide it was boring.

The Bulgarians then booked rooms in the Swallow, Stockton-on-Tees, which would have meant the Romanian team moving out on the double. Just as the Darlington council was crowing about this coup, Stoichkov whipped his team off instead to the Holiday Inn in Seaton Burn, just six miles from Newcastle, where they were playing.

Cue outrage from Darlington. "What kind of hotels are they used to in Bulgaria anyway?" pondered one observer.

Just when Will Hutton and his ideas on the "stakeholder economy" seem to be everywhere, here comes a bunch of businessmen who have seen the light. The likes of Martin Sorrell of WPP Group and Stuart Hampshire, chairman of John Lewis, have signed up to help fund the Centre for Tomorrow's Company, a think-tank devoted to reforming British business. An inquiry by the Royal Society for the encouragement of the Arts, Manufacture and Commerce (RSA) forms the basis for the group.

The report advocates the Hutton-ish "inclusive approach". This is pretty touchy-feely stuff for hard-headed businessmen. "Until we free ourselves from adversarialism in business relationships, UK supply chains will continue to underperform." No more price wars or contested bids, then?

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IS IT THAT WE WERE NAMED BEST TRANSATLANTIC BUSINESS CLASS BY ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW?

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سكيا من الامال

Clarke's difficulty with figures is worrying



COMMENT

The Chancellor has fallen prey to a very human characteristic: on nearly all the important numbers he has been over-optimistic, sometimes hopelessly so.

Kenneth Clarke might have complete faith in his own handling of the UK economy (last week's Mansion House speech) but others would be forgiven for just the faintest hint of doubt. This is not as dramatic as full-blown atheism yet (always excepting the Euro-sceptics, of course, who don't count, anyway), but there is a growing band of the mildly agnostic.

On most conventional measures, Mr Clarke's performance has indeed been a highly commendable one. But there is one area where he has fallen prey to a very human characteristic: on nearly all the important numbers he has been over-optimistic, sometimes hopelessly so. Public sector borrowing is just one. Even with the benefit of a £1.1bn net contribution to the Government's finances from the sale of Railtrack, the PSBR last month came in at £3.2bn. The likely overshoot for the year is now anything up to £8bn, which doesn't give a Chancellor promising sound public finances much, if any room, for tax cuts.

If borrowing were the only area of concern, then that might be thought acceptable, but it is actually symptomatic of a whole series of missed forecasts. The Chancellor has been persistently over-optimistic about the scope for improvement in public spending. His growth forecast for this year looks way out of line, something which is expected to be corrected in new Treasury predictions next month that will cut the growth number from 3 per cent to perhaps as low as 2.5 per

cent. Even inflation, though plainly tamed, is above target. Not so hot after all, eh?

If the Government were a publicly quoted company, it would never get away with such recklessly misleading predictions. The Treasury's persistent promises of jam tomorrow would long ago have been rattled, and its chief executive thrown overboard. But then a national economy is a rather more complex animal than even the largest of multinational corporations. The Chancellor perhaps deserves the benefit of the doubt, even if his characteristically relaxed view of the importance of forecasts smacks a little of complacency.

In any case, Mr Clarke's ever-so-convenient difficulty with the figures is hardly unique. It should be recalled that, on average, the PSBR overshoots forecast by £10bn a year. On that measure, the Chancellor isn't doing too badly. And don't forget, the Chancellor's aim is to get the budget back in balance only over "the medium term" (the Mansion House speech again). In Treasury parlance, that's five years away.

But hold on a moment. Five years is a rather longer time horizon than the Treasury was forecasting for a balanced budget at the time of its last statement in November – one year longer to be precise. It seems that once again hope is to be postponed. You don't need to be an expert on these matters to figure out why. If short-term forecasts don't matter very much, it is not going to be hard to make them justify a healthy package of

tax-cutting pre-election measures. No wonder Mr Clarke was able to insist in his Mansion House speech that policy was being set on the assumption the present Government would be re-elected. Wonderful thing, the never-never.

Regulators cloud Southern battle

For the time being, the battle for Southern Water is in abeyance but it cannot be too long before the auction heats up once more with a new bid from ScottishPower. Bidding wars are nearly always had news for the poor unfortunate that ends up with the prize. In this case, however, it is not just shareholders in the two rival bidders – Scottish and Southern Electric – that need to be concerned. Both bids involve a sizeable chunk of debt. As a consequence, regulators too are becoming highly exercised by the possibility of overpaying.

Southern Water already has a quite substantial accumulated backlog of incomplete capital spending – its underspend could be as high as £300m. The last thing regulators want is an over-geared company incapable of meeting its obligations. That way the customer will ultimately end up picking up the tab. The risk of this happening with the Southern Electric bid seems to be rather higher than with the Scottish alternative. The Southern Electric bid is essentially a defen-

sive one to keep the Scots out. Southern Electric may in these circumstances think that to overpay is the lesser of two evils. Not so the regulators, who have become increasingly concerned about the general trend towards equity cancellation, and its replacement with debt, among the utilities. It may well be they have something to say about "sky's the limit" bidding wars.

Baby Aim is a bouncing one-year-old

Today is the first anniversary of the Alternative Investment Market. With a year under its belt, it's worth conducting a short health check. Aim was set up after a long wrangle over how how tightly it should be regulated. The compromise was a market with few rules, and with the main responsibility for ensuring that companies on Aim were honest and decent given to the nominated advisers who bring them to market.

In the event, there have been almost as many new issues on Aim as companies transferring from the old Rule 4.2 market and from the unsuccessful USM, which is being phased out at the end of the year. In the 11 months to the end of May, 80 new entrants to Aim raised £347m new money. Another 82 companies transferred from the 4.2 market and two from the USM.

At the start Aim was slow to produce new money for companies, but then things picked

up. Some £39m was raised in March, £56m in April and £53m in May, with market participants predicting a substantial increase this month.

This may not sound large compared with the venture capital needs of British industry. But these are mostly small companies and it is the numbers of new entrants that count – a total of 13 in May alone.

It is hard to buy a large line of shares without moving the price excessively, so larger deals are naturally taking place off market. Increasing the liquidity of the market will remain a key objective. Even so, Ivey & Sims Baronsmead, which raised £44m this spring to invest in an Aim investment trust, is said to be ahead of its target of investing half the funds within three months, and the trading volume of 4.2 stocks has moved once they moved over to Aim. On the whole then, Aim is fulfilling its purpose of providing a market, and a source of capital, for smaller companies.

The main question mark now is over how the Exchange copes with the collapses that are inevitable in a market of more than 100 small companies. Some will go to the wall because they are intrinsically risky, and if their prospectuses said so, who can complain. But others will be had apples. The Stock Exchange will have to take a tough line with nominated advisers in such cases if the new market is to establish long-term credibility. But thus far, the babe seems to be in rude health.

Minorco sells 10% Matthey stake for £132m

ROGER TRAPP

Minorco, the South African-owned natural resources group, has pulled out of the precious metals and specialist ceramics group Johnson Matthey by selling its near-10 per cent stake to broker SBC Warburg for £132m.

Warburg was understood to be seeking to place the stock at about 625p a share. Johnson Matthey closed down 20p at 630p.

The company – which is owned by Anglo American, the Oppenheimer family and De Beers, and chaired by Julian Ogilvie Thompson – explained that the sale of the 9.9 per cent holding was part of a programme of disposals designed to strengthen the company's balance sheet as it prepared to

develop several significant mining projects around the world.

Explaining that the stake had been a "non-strategic investment", a Minorco spokeswoman said that the company had been "a totally different animal" when the Johnson Matthey shares were acquired from Charter Consolidated at 490p in February 1993.

For example, Minorco had wanted to be exposed to the platinum market, she said.

Recently, Minorco acquired several mines at various stages of development and estimates that these will require funding of about \$2bn, half of which will come from the Minorco balance sheet. As a result, Minorco is looking to increase its cash assets.

In February this year, Minorco sold a 9.6 per cent holding worth about \$82m in US oil and gas company Santa Fe Energy Resources.

A month later, it received a total of about \$250m by disposing of an 18.9 per cent stake in Australian mining group Normandy Mining and a 3.7 per cent interest in the company's gold mining arm, PosGold.

The spokeswoman said Minorco would be reviewing the situation and selling other investments as the need arose.

Last year, Minorco, whose chief executive is Hank Slack, announced a 51 per cent increase in underlying profits, to \$365m.



Julian Ogilvie Thompson: raising cash assets

IN BRIEF

• Japan's economy grew by 3.0 per cent in the first quarter of 1996 compared with the previous three months – the strongest quarterly performance since the beginning of 1973 before the impact was felt of the first oil shock. Gross domestic product rose by an annual rate 12.7 per cent. Growth was boosted by almost every category, from consumption to capital expenditure to government spending and housing investment. Weak exports and strong imports were the only negative factors on growth. *Bloomberg*

• US housing starts in May fell by 4.7 per cent to 1.43 million. Higher mortgage rates and rising borrowing costs for builders were blamed for the larger-than-expected drop.

• Marks & Spencer's top five directors made almost £1.5m from the exercise of share options last year. Chairman Sir Richard Greenbury, whose salary rose marginally to £816,000, made £266,000. Deputy chairman Keith Oates made £317,000. Three other directors, Guy McKracken, Peter Salisbury and Andrew Stone, cashed in options worth £340,000, £352,000 and £208,000 respectively.

• Cable & Wireless will make £60m from the sale of a stake in Asia Satellite Communications, which is joining to the Hong Kong stock market today. C&W is reducing its holding in AsiaSat from 33.3 per cent to 23 per cent. Its new stake is worth £150m, based on the public offer price of HK\$20 per share.

• BT said its "friends and family" discount scheme now has over 5 million residential subscribers. The scheme offers 10 per cent savings on calls to five nominated telephone numbers. Membership has doubled since the £4.99 joining fee was scrapped in April and the discount increased from 5 per cent.

• First Bus, Britain's largest bus company, reported an 11 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £22m last year due to restructuring costs. Operating profits rose from £32.6m to £35m. The figures exclude the Greater Manchester Bus and SB Holdings of Glasgow acquisitions, which were made after the year-end.

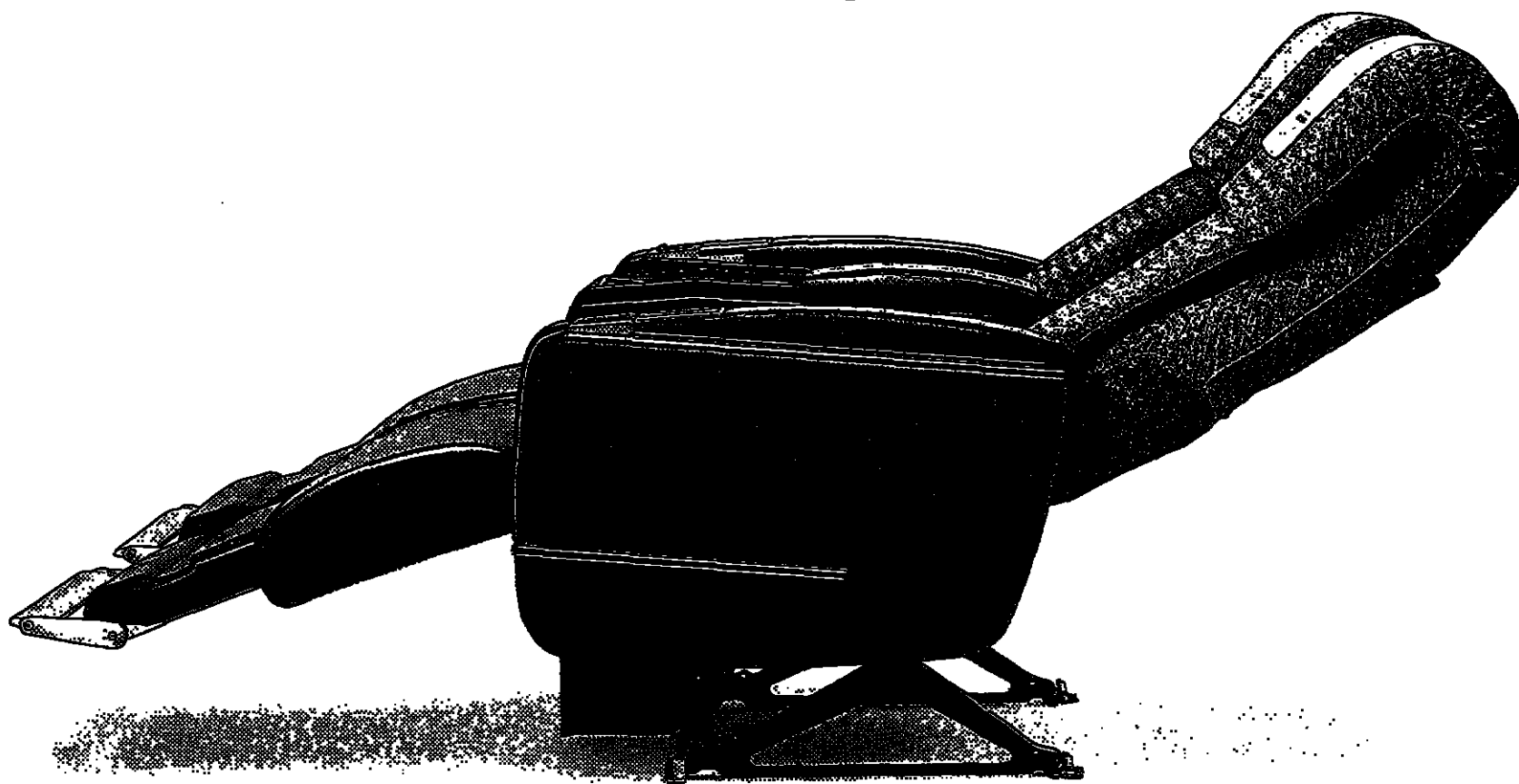
• The European Commission is expected to delay until next week a decision to outlaw DM240m (£103m) in subsidies granted to an investment by German car-maker Volkswagen in Saxony, eastern Germany. The package is helping VW finance car and engine plants in Saxony intended to increase production of the Golf marque. The total cost of the investment is put at DM4.7bn.

• Chiroscience confirmed it was being sued for alleged wrongful dismissal by a former deputy chairman, but the drugs firm said the case was without basis and unlikely to succeed. A spokesman for the company said Nowell Stebbing was also claiming alleged wrongful removal of share options worth up to £5.5m.

• Banner Homes is halving its interim dividend to 0.7p after annual pre-tax profits fell from £1.27m to £751,000. Dwindling supplies of land are forcing land prices above previous peaks, Banner said.

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BUSINESSFIRST
2 SEATS FOR
THE PRICE
OF ONE

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3,756.4 -5.1

FT-SE 250
4454.7 -7.5

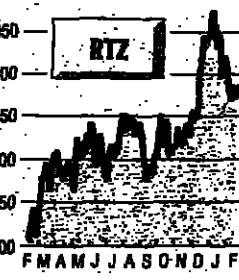
FT-SE 350
1898.3 -2.8

SEAQ VOLUME
749.9m shares,
28,215 bargains

Gilts Index
91.92 -0.98

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

short price, pence



Cheerful Barclays and despondent BTR steal limelight

TAKING STOCK

Barclays, the banking group, and BTR, the suffering conglomerate, dominated a lacklustre stock market. The bank's story was one of optimism with the shares said to be heading for 900p, but for BTR it was another round of anxiety and uncertainty.

In busy trading Barclays rose 18p to 800p with the market enjoying its adroit sale of part of its 31 shareholding and continuing to speculate it has a big deal on its banking floor, perhaps the flotation of its Barclays de Zoete Wedd investment side.

Rumours BZW is set to be demerged have been flying around the market for some weeks. In some quarters the 31 deal is seen as a forerunner to unlocking BZW.

BTR fell 5p to 259p, lowest for four years. The 1995/96 warrants dropped to 9.5p; they could be dead in the water, giving holders the right to subscribe for one new share at 258p in the 30 days following September's interim report.

The latest decline was sparked by stories that big investors were being sounded out about a possible dividend cut; a reduced profit forecast by BZW and suggestions the conglomerate had called analyst meetings for next week.

"We never comment on market rumours," was the company's response to inquiries. The group has three sets of warrants outstanding. This year's would produce £240m; next year's £350m and the 1997 warrants £425m.

There is little doubt BTR would sorely miss the income as the proceeds have almost certainly been factored into its cash calculations.



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

1998 version is now down to 6p. The strike price is 405p.

The rest of the market had another uneventful session with the FT-SE 100 index giving up 5.1 points at 3,756.4.

Hopes are rising that ScottishPower is on the verge of lifting its offer for Southern Water.

Its first splash, £1.5bn, was topped by Southern Electric's £1.0bn. Scottish shares were little changed at 305p; they have felt the strain of bid action and are only just above their 12-month low.

Southern Electric was dulled 4p to 672p and the target slipped 5p to 988p.

Smith & Nephew, the

health-care group, stretched to a new high of 215.25p as take-over hopes mingled with prospects for its artificially grown skin development, but Cartron Communications was caught out by suggestions that Disney was cutting back film production which would hit its video operations.

A £4.8 million sale at 509p also contributed to a 15p fall to 513p.

RITZ improved 11p to 983p as the copper market appeared more stable and Johnson Matthey, the metals group, eased 20p to 630p as SBC Warburg, in a bought deal, took on 9.9 per cent stake from Milnorco, the South African

group. It was unclear whether Warburg managed to place all the shares at its 625p asking price.

The latest round in the superstore hostilities left Tesco off 5.5p to 300.5p. Asda, which also had to contend with the added setback over its drugs price battle, lost 1.5p to 118.25p.

Cable & Wireless rose 9p to 420p following the flotation of Asia Satellite Communications in Hong Kong; its 33 per cent has been cut to 23 per cent, netting £60m.

Greene King, the East Anglian brewer splashing out £197.5m for The Magic Pub Co, rose 24p to 692p.

Fibrecom, planning a national high-speed network, produced a wire-humming debut, touching 139p and settling at 131p against a 100p issue price.

But Carnell, the travel publisher from the Nigel Wray stable, was a disappointment

failing to reach its 27p suspension price. The company, now called Columbus, closed at 23p.

Bardons, the aggregates group which has attracted considerable speculative interest in the past, held at 38.75p. A US investment house, Treedy Brown, has acquired a 3.4 per cent interest.

Mayflower, a specialist engineer, fell 13.5p to 108.5p as its ambitious £172m takeover of the US Pullman group, was abandoned following a rival offer.

Manchester United continued to dip, reflecting last week's batch of director share sales. The price fell 19p to 441p. A Merrill Lynch recommendation added 3p to Wembley at 361p.

Andrews Sykes, the air conditioning group, continued to benefit from the hot weather, rising 13p to a 433p peak. The shares were 198p a year ago.

Details are due this week of the flotation of London & Edinburgh Publishing, producing brochures for such events as this week's Royal Ascot. Around £1.5m is being raised through the sale of 30 per cent of the company. L&E is also deeply involved in event advertising and is thinking of running a duty-free shopping service on the Internet. John East & Partners and Fiske & Co are handling the flotation which is expected to value the company at around £4.5m.

A De Gruyck, running Jersey's top department store, continues to attract attention. Merchant Retail Group, which operates the Jopling stores, has acquired another 136,400 shares, lifting its stake to 24.09 per cent. De Gruyck, unchanged at 195p, has said it wants to talk to MRG.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex rights: Ex dividend: Ex all: Unlisted Securities Market: Suspended: pp: Parity Paid pm: Nil Paid Shares: 2 AM Stock

Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Seaq. Simply dial 0891 123 333, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 123 333 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

For a detailed description of the Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 333.

For a detailed description of the Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 333.

Call cost 50p per minute (cheap rate), and 40p at all other times. Call charges include VAT.

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000
Johnson Matthey	300000	Shell	600000	Marle & Spencer	70000	Robson	500000
Harmon	600000	British Gas	600000	Fab Royce	70000	Parsons	500000
BT	1000000	BT	600000	BT	600000	BT	600000
Cable & Wireless	600000	BT	600000	BT	600000	BT	600000
British Telecom	1000000	BT	600000	BT	600000	BT	600000

FT-SE 100 Index hour by hour

Open	3753.5 up 2.0	11.00	3757.5 down 4.0	14.00	3757.9 down 3.6
High	3758.5	11.00	3757.5 down 4.0	14.00	3757.9 down 3.6
Low	3753.5	11.00	3757.5 down 4.0	14.00	3757.9 down 3.6
Close	3753.5	11.00	3757.5 down 4.0	14.00	3757.9 down 3.6

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Government Securities

Index-linked

Short

Medium

Long

Unlisted

Index-linked

Short

Medium

Long

Unlisted

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Short

Medium

Long

Unlisted

Index-linked

Short

Medium

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RTS

1. The first step is to identify the problem. This involves understanding the nature of the problem, its scope, and its impact.

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING			DOLLAR			D-MARK	
Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Country	Spot
US	15738	6-4	71-8	1300			26821
Canada	2173	1-4	52-7	1278	2-1	2-0	83230
Germany	23304	52-46	52-3	1254	84-8	84-8	12000
France	13292	52-30	384-363	1247	75-46	70-27	10767
Italy	16331	52-73	52-73	1246	46-51	124-19	84336
Spain	16208	70-70	70-70	1237	45-44	139-133	71-302
Japan	8559	65-10	65-10	1246	7-8	73-25	122-76
Belgium	16331	4-4	35-28	1218	6-5	73-25	212005
Switzerland	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005
Netherlands	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005
Denmark	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005
Sweden	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005
Portugal	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005
Greece	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005
India	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005
Singapore	16331	65-10	65-10	1246	65-10	65-10	212005

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1500	Algeria	1000
Australia	1500	Angola	1000
Brazil	1500	Benin	1000
Canada	1500	Burkina Faso	1000
Chad	1500	Cameroon	1000
Cote d'Ivoire	1500	Chad	1000
Dominican Republic	1500	Chad	1000
Egypt	1500	Chad	1000
France	1500	Chad	1000
Germany	1500	Chad	1000
Ghana	1500	Chad	1000
Greece	1500	Chad	1000
India	1500	Chad	1000
Italy	1500	Chad	1000
Japan	1500	Chad	1000
Korea	1500	Chad	1000
Malaysia	1500	Chad	1000
Mexico	1500	Chad	1000
Netherlands	1500	Chad	1000
Nigeria	1500	Chad	1000
Portugal	1500	Chad	1000
Spain	1500	Chad	1000
Sweden	1500	Chad	1000
Switzerland	1500	Chad	1000
Taiwan	1500	Chad	1000
Thailand	1500	Chad	1000
Turkey	1500	Chad	1000
USA	1500	Chad	1000
West Germany	1500	Chad	1000
Yugoslavia	1500	Chad	1000

Tourist Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1500	Algeria	1000
Australia	1500	Angola	1000
Brazil	1500	Benin	1000
Canada	1500	Burkina Faso	1000
Chad	1500	Cameroon	1000
Cote d'Ivoire	1500	Chad	1000
Dominican Republic	1500	Chad	1000
Egypt	1500	Chad	1000
France	1500	Chad	1000
Germany	1500	Chad	1000
Ghana	1500	Chad	1000
Greece	1500	Chad	1000
India	1500	Chad	1000
Italy	1500	Chad	1000
Japan	1500	Chad	1000
Korea	1500	Chad	1000
Malaysia	1500	Chad	1000
Mexico	1500	Chad	1000
Netherlands	1500	Chad	1000
Nigeria	1500	Chad	1000
Portugal	1500	Chad	1000
Spain	1500	Chad	1000
Sweden	1500	Chad	1000
Switzerland	1500	Chad	1000
Taiwan	1500	Chad	1000
Thailand	1500	Chad	1000
Turkey	1500	Chad	1000
USA	1500	Chad	1000
West Germany	1500	Chad	1000
Yugoslavia	1500	Chad	1000

Interest Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1500	Algeria	1000
Australia	1500	Angola	1000
Brazil	1500	Benin	1000
Canada	1500	Burkina Faso	1000
Chad	1500	Cameroon	1000
Cote d'Ivoire	1500	Chad	1000
Dominican Republic	1500	Chad	1000
Egypt	1500	Chad	1000
France	1500	Chad	1000
Germany	1500	Chad	1000
Ghana	1500	Chad	1000
Greece	1500	Chad	1000
India	1500		

UNIT TRUST GUIDE

arts news

edited by David Lister

Equity rules: Producer condemns eccentric decision as leading actor fails to land Broadway role because he lacks 'star status'

Why Gambon isn't big enough for States

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

Michael Gambon has been refused permission to recreate a West End role on Broadway because Americans do not consider him a big enough star, it emerged yesterday.

The National Theatre had hoped to transfer Robert Fox's production of David Hare's play *Skylight*, about an affair between a restaurateur and a radical young teacher, to New York with Gambon in the lead role.

But, following talks, American Equity has refused to let Gambon perform, arguing that the actor who played the lead in Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective* is of insufficient 'star status'.

Its prohibition was confirmed by a spokeswoman at the National Theatre, where Gambon played the part of Tom Sergeant when *Skylight* opened last year. American Equity, the American actors' union, to comment on the decision described by Mr Fox as 'eccentric'.

Complicated rules presided over by the actors' union mean it can be extremely difficult for British actors to play in America if, like Gambon, they are not passed under the star status rule.

Producers are then obliged to prove that there is no American actor who can replace him or her in the part in question by carrying out auditions throughout the country.

The only alternative is for an actor to go to America under the exchange scheme, which allows an American actor of similar status to play in Britain in a straight swap.

Those who have previously fallen foul of Equity's perception of their star status (or otherwise) in America include Juliet Stevenson, who could not take her lead role in *Death and the Maiden* to New York, and Billie Whitelaw - despite her unique position as Beckett's muse.

Michael Pennington was also



Lacking status: Michael Gambon appearing in the West End production of David Hare's *Skylight*, which he will not be able to recreate on Broadway. Photograph: Stuart Morris

not deemed a big enough star, and missed the chance to act in Shaffer's *Gift of the Gorgon* on Broadway. Meanwhile, those who have been allowed include Elaine Paige, Tom Courtenay, and Vanessa Redgrave.

Such decisions raise the controversial question of what exactly is a star. Equity in Britain, which applies the same rule in reverse to American actors, admits it has never written a definition.

"It's impossible to say," admits Peter Finch, who heads Equity's theatre department. "It's often obvious, but if there's an element of doubt we would apply criteria such as what work that person has done, whether they have played in more than one country, and if so, which countries, and which theatre companies."

Jeff Kaye, European bureau chief of the entertainment industry paper the *Hollywood Reporter*, notes that British actors and actresses have been inhibited by traditionally being

stereotyped into certain roles: the upper-class twit (a la Hugh Grant), the suave gentleman (Sean Connery's James Bond) or the evil villain (Alan Rickman).

"Michael Gambon rated 22 out of 100 in our star power list of the most bankable actors and actresses for last year," he added. "That's pretty low. Other Brits did far better. Kenneth Branagh was at 74, Sean Connery was at 94, and Hugh Grant was 81."

Stardom also differs in the worlds of theatre and film. Hol-

lywood is about looks; the stage puts ability further up the pecking order.

"Theatre is much more about the quality of the actor because that's part of the experience of going to the theatre," said Nick James, deputy editor of the film magazine *Sight and Sound*. "In cinema it's to do with glamour rather than talent."

"Gambon rose to prominence in the English theatre as a marvellous stage performer, and that's enough on the English stage. But in the States he

gets seen in movies where he plays parts more to do with hack-work - like Julia Roberts' father in the film *Mary Reilly*."

The problem is that any definition of what makes a star cannot include the imponderable quality which lifts a lead actor into a household name. That is an elusive mix of track record, personality, marketing, looks, enviability quotient, bankability and love life.

Emma Thompson, for example, seems to lack the enviability quotient, partly a result

of her jolly-hockey-sticks looks. Daniel Day-Lewis, however, has a broodingly tragic appearance which fits the bill. The jury is still out on Kate Winslet: her looks and films so far are a plus, but her youth and naïveté may prove a problem.

Of course, early death always helps in the quest for entertainment's holy grail. The ultimate star remains Marilyn Monroe, who combined a mysterious demise with an affair with the President, breathtaking looks and a tragic childhood.

US welcome...



Vanessa Redgrave in *Orphans* Descending was accepted in the US because both Equities (UK and US) accept such "star" performers without demur.

... and unwelcome



American Equity denied Billie Whitelaw star status, even though she was acting in plays Samuel Beckett wrote for her.



Sir Peter Hall's revival of Ibsen's *Master Builder* recently met the same fate. Alan Bates, its *Solness*, was acceptable to Equity but its *Hilde*, Victoria Hamilton, was simply a brilliant newcomer and thus taboo.

Car park in a courtyard to be a riverside art gallery

DAVID LISTER

Cars parked by Inland Revenue staff are to be banned from one of London's premier cultural sites, as part of the process of turning it into a riverside art gallery and courtyard for tourists.

The decision urged on the Government by Lord Rothschild, chairman of the Na-

tional Heritage Memorial Fund, marks a victory for the long-running *Independent* campaign to free key areas of cultural importance from parked cars and open them up for tourists and other visitors to walk through.

The Chambers courtyard off the Strand, in central London, borders the Courtauld Institute of Art and the Courtauld Galleries - with its famous im-

pressionist collection - and Somerset House, which at present is home to the Inland Revenue and the Lord Chancellor's Department.

The courtyard, designed by the 18th-century architect Sir William Chambers, was one of the focal points of the *Independent* campaign to have parked cars removed from cultural spaces; but Inland Rev-

enue staff were reluctant to move. However, by the end of the year they will be forced to park elsewhere or use public transport.

The Government has agreed that the Lord Chancellor's department will move from the river-fronting south block of Somerset House, and the building will be turned into a new art gallery to house the £75m Gilbert Collection of silver, gold, micro-mosaics and gold boxes. The river terrace will transform the building, currently housing divorce courts, into one of Britain's most prestigious art spaces.

The move to allow visitors to wander through the courtyard area also signals a new will. Lord Rothschild said: "I fervently hope that through the Heritage Lottery Fund some of the hidden historic open spaces in London become available for the public's enjoyment, in line with the *Independent* campaign. The Heritage Lottery Fund is able to ensure that cars will no longer be parked in the Great Quadrangle so that this great and long neglected urban open space can once again be enjoyed by the public."

The Heritage Lottery Fund, which Lord Rothschild chairs, has agreed to offer a grant of £15.5m to help refurbish and fit out the Terrace Building as well as putting up funds to endow the Gilbert Collection.

The *Independent* campaign to remove parked cars from important cultural locations also targeted London's Royal Academy, off Piccadilly. The RA has also agreed that cars should be removed from its frontage.

Other targets of the campaign were the forecourt of the British Museum, and Horse Guards Parade - venue for the 'Trooping Of The Colour' where civil servants' cars are parked.

Neither of these two sites has yet been cleared for pedestrians.

NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS

Midland Interest Rates for Personal Customers

Midland Bank Base Rate

Effective from: 6 June 1996

5.75% Per Annum

CURRENT ACCOUNTS

	Gross %	Net %
Overdraft		
£2,000+	0.50%	0.40%
below £2,000	0.20%	0.16%
Meridian		
£10,000+	2.72%	2.17%
£2,000-£9,999	1.00%	0.80%
Below £2,000	0.20%	0.16%
Student A/c	2.23%	1.78%
Current A/c for 16-19 year olds	2.23%	1.78%
Livestash	2.48%	1.98%

OVERDRAFTS

	Per Month %	EAR %
Overdraft	1.25%	16.0%
Meridian		
£10,000+	0.95%	12.0%
£5,000+	1.05%	13.3%
Below £5,000	1.20%	15.3%
Nonauthorised	1.85%	24.6%

MORTGAGES

	Per Annum	APR
Standard Variable Rate	6.99%	7.2%
Large Advance Rate		
£50,000+	6.89%	7.1%
£100,000+	6.74%	6.9%
Equity Release Loan		
First Charge	6.99%	7.2%
Second Charge	8.99%	9.8%
Mortgages no longer sold		
Home Loan Rate	6.99%	7.2%
Home Improvement Loan Rate	8.99%	9.2%
Loans sanctioned before 26/4/89		
House Mortgage Rate	6.99%	7.1%

LOANS

	Per Month	APR
FlexiLoan	1.50%	19.5%
	Per Annum	APR
Houseowner Reserve	12.4%	12.9%

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

TERESA 6.5% Tax Free

High Interest Deposit Bond	Annual Interest	Gross %	Net %
3 Year	7.00	5.60	
2 Year	6.50	5.20	
1 Year	5.75	4.60	
6 Months	5.50	4.40	

Monthly option available

Exchequer	Annual Interest	Gross %	Net %
90 Day Notice			
£100,000+	5.50	4.40	
£50,000+	5.00	4.00	
£25,000+	4.75	3.80	
£10,000+	4.35	3.48	
£5,000+	4.00	3.20	

30 Day Notice

£100,000+	5.25	4.20	
£50,000+	4.75	3.80	
£25,000+	4.50	3.60	
£10,000+	4.25	3.40	
£5,000+	3.75	3.00	

Monthly option available

Meridian Savings (Instant Access)	Gross %	Net %
£100,000+	4.17	3.33
£50,000+	3.93	3.14
£25,000+	3.79	3.03
£10,000+	3.55	2.84
£2,000+	3.21	2.56

Saver Plus

(Instant Access)	Gross %	Net %
£25,000+	3.72	2.97
£10,000+	3.23	2.58
£5,000+	2.98	2.38
£500+	2.49	1.99
Up to £500	2.00	1.60

High Interest Cheque Account

(Instant Access)	Gross %	Net %
£50,000+	3.23	2.58
£25,000+	2.74	2.19
£10,000+	2.00	1.60
£2,000+	1.25	1.00

These rates of interest are current as at 18th June except for Mortgages for existing borrowers and Mortgages no longer sold where the effective date is 5th August 1996. Gross: The rate before the deduction of tax applied to interest on savings. Net: The rate after the deduction of tax applied to interest on savings. Tax Free: Tax free means that the interest is free of tax applied to interest on savings.



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THE INDIAN SUN

Blanc and...

12

IDS

France

Bulgaria

INSIDE

WAITING FOR

THE INDEPENDENT

Summer of sport

Wednesday 19 June 1996

Blanc and Loko combine to wreak revenge on Stoichkov's dispirited cohorts



Top of the world: Laurent Blanc (centre) rises highest to greet the crowd after scoring France's first goal in their 3-1 win over Bulgaria at St James' Park yesterday

Photograph by Graham Chadwick/Allsport

France banish the ghost of Bulgaria to reach last eight

France, still burning with indignation at the part Bulgaria played in their failure to reach the World Cup finals of 1994, gained revenge at St James' Park yesterday to ensure they finished top of Group B. The blow proved to be a fatal one for Bulgaria, who were denied a place in the last eight because of Spain's win over Romania 90 miles away at Elland Road.

The day began with any two of three teams capable of reaching the quarter-finals, but Spain prevailed at Leeds to finish with five points. That was one more than the Bulgarians, who will no doubt reflect on the Hristo Stoichkov "goal" that was wrongly disallowed for offside against the Spaniards.

Stoichkov was implicated in further controversy after the match, when one of his opponents, Marcel Desailly, accused him of racism. "In the first 20 minutes he made racist comments towards me and other

African players in our team," he said. "I do not consider Stoichkov to be a great player any more and I don't take anything from my battle from him. He was saying black this and black that."

Stoichkov replied: "It's normal, if you took a microphone on to the pitch you would find it was happening everywhere."

Departure from the tournament was a harsh outcome for Bulgaria, although they could have no complaints about the result of this match. Stoichkov, apart, their attack looked leaden and clumsy compared to the nimble French.

The Parma striker, almost inevitably, got the Bulgarian goal that would prove a consolation buried by the French strikes from Laurent Blanc, an own goal by Luboslav Penev, and Patrice Loko. In the closing moments, Stoichkov stood on his own on the half-way line, totally uninterested in the proceedings. "We were punished for our

Guy Hodgson

BULGARIA 1 FRANCE 3

Stoichkov (69 min) Blanc (21 min)
Penev og (63 min) Loko (90 min)
Half-time: 0-1
Attendance at St James' Park: 26,976

The French still look back in horror on the November night two and half years ago when the Bulgarians pinched a place in USA 94 with a last-minute goal mistakes," Dimitar Penev, the Bulgarian coach, said, "but despite this defeat I still feel my team has done well. France have paid us back now."

BULGARIA (4-4-2): Mihailov (Reading); Kremenov (Olympique Lyonnais); Ivanov (Rapid Vienna); Hachev (Hamburg); Tsvetanov (Waldhof Mannheim); Lechev (Hamburg); Vankov (Bayern Leverkusen); Yordanov (Sporting Lisbon); Stoichkov (VFB Stuttgart); Stankov (Parma); Penev (Viktoria Plzen). Substitutes: Borimirov (1860 Munich) for Vankov, 76; Donkov (CSKA Sofia) for Stankov, 81.

FRANCE (4-2-2-1): Lamine (Paris St-Germain); Thuram (Parma); Blanc (Barcelona); Desailly (Milan); Lizarazu (Bordeaux); Karamanov (Sampdoria); Deschamps (Juventus); Guerin (Paris St-Germain); Zidane (Bordeaux); Djorkaeff (Internazionale); Dugarry (Milan). Substitutes: Pedros (Nantes) for Zidane, 61; Loko (Paris St-Germain) for Dugarry, 69.

Bookings: Bulgaria: Nenov, Kremenov. France: Desailly, Dugarry. Referee: D. Gallagher (England) replaced by P. Duran (England), 27. Name of the match: Djorkaeff.

in Paris. From the lusty singing of "La Marseillaise" beforehand to the crunching foul Desailly inflicted on Stoichkov in the third minute, it was clear they were highly motivated.

This energy was nearly sated as early in the 13th minute. Borislav Mikhailov diving low to his left to tip Youri Djorkaeff's free-kick round the post. It proved to be a temporary reprieve, however, because seven minutes later Djorkaeff floated over a corner from the right that Blanc met emphatically with his head, thumping the ball between Mikhailov and Emil Kremenov on the line.

Mikhailov also had to be agile to save a chip from Christophe Dugarry after 43 minutes and only just got a boot to the ball when Djorkaeff missed a through ball from Vincent Guerin and almost wrong-footed him. The Bulgarian goalkeeper was stopping everything the French were throwing at

him; he could not be expected to halt miscalculations from his own players. When Penev inadvertently flicked the ball backwards from Djorkaeff's corner after 62 minutes, he was stranded two yards off his line.

The Bulgarians looked beaten but, after 68 minutes, they were awarded a free-kick right of centre 25 yards out and, with arrogant ease, Stoichkov took just one step and then curled a left-foot shot past Bernard Lama. It was the first successful free-kick of Euro 96 and his third goal in three matches.

As the Bulgarians sensed hope, however, the Spanish got their winner five minutes from time. The white shirts deflated with despair and in the last minute the French landed the final blow. Christian Karembeu played a pass through a square Bulgarian back line and Loko beat Mikhailov on the right of the area before placing the ball past Ivailo Yordanov on the line.

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INSIDE TODAY'S 12-PAGE SECTION

WAITING FOR WIMBLEDON

Bud Collins on why Andre Agassi (left) may yet surprise his critics
Laurie Pigeon bids farewell to No. 1 court



THE ART OF THE SPIN BOWLER

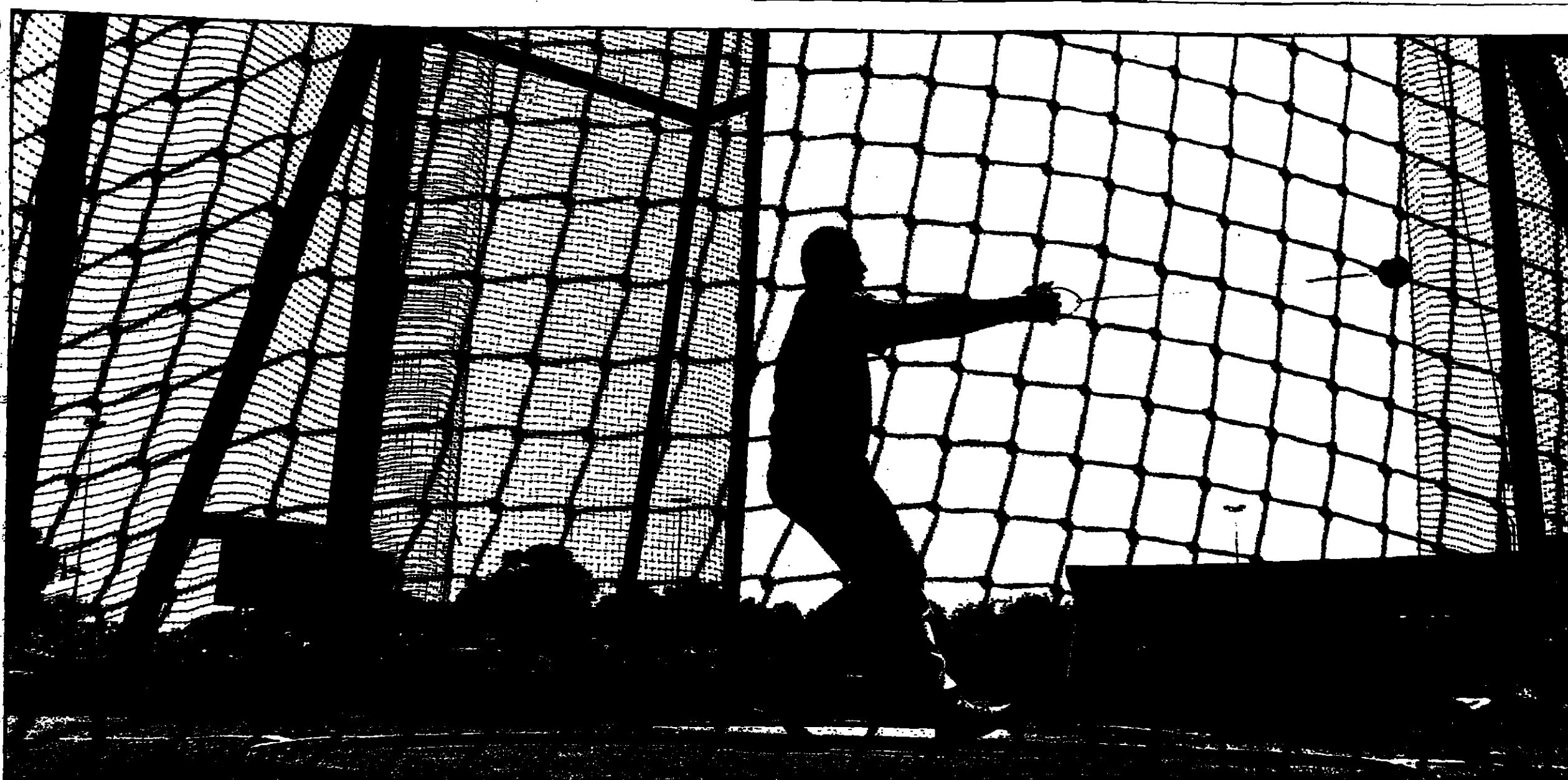
Min Patel (right) talks to Adam Szreter



The professional's view
Pat Nevill on Euro 96

A day at the races

Richard Edmondson, Greg Wood and Serena Mackesy on the first day of Royal Ascot



Hammer and tongs: The muscles on these men were incredible, pecs like melons, sides of beef for shoulders - and they were only the supporters

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Who is Mick Jones?

You're really going to do something on the hammer? Oh, that's great," Malcolm said. "No one ever does anything on the hammer. I was in the hammer myself, actually, but I was too small, that's what it came down to."

Malcolm was now a press officer for the three As. We were standing in the half-empty Alexandra Stadium at the start of finals day, a time of wild hopes, soon to be followed for many by the broken dream of an Atlanta-less summer, well, for the men's hammer throwers, the virtual guarantee of one.

"Any hammer thrower you could recommend?" I asked Malcolm. "I don't know, bit of a character maybe?"

"Er, Smith's bound to win it. I mean, he usually does, Dave does. But the one you really want is Mick Jones. He's a real character. And his coach, Alan Bircham. He's the same. Alan Bircham trained me, actually. Both of them are real characters."

Malcolm told me the hammer followers always sat in the same seats in the stand behind the hammer cage. There wouldn't be many of them. Once I got there, I'd probably recognise Alan Bircham straight away. He'd be the balding man, wearing a brightly coloured shirt no doubt, shouting louder than anyone else and cracking jokes. And Mick Jones, well, you couldn't miss him. After the event was over, they'd go and sit in the stand with the hammer followers. They always did. They liked to stick together.

A pleasant light breeze fluttered the pages of stats lying around the press room. Mick Jones, personal best, 72.10 metres. And that wasn't this year. The Olympic qualifying standard was 74. Dave Smith had done 75.10. Paul Head had gone further than Mick Jones, too. He'd done 74.02, but that was some time ago. It looked as though the Olympic place was all but Dave Smith's already.

The athletics writers were just unpacking their gear, chatting idly. Only the hammer was going on. The big events weren't on for two or three hours. Did you hear about Linford yesterday? Paid a visit to the press room, apparently. It looked like war, but it ended in handshakes. Unbelievable. Typical Linford. You should have been there. Du'aide Ladejo? He's talking

it up a bit, isn't he? You've got to fancy Roger for the 400.

They were an affable bunch, really looking forward to the big races with the residual enthusiasm of fanhood. Not like some of the football writers with their I-could-be-a-manager Umbro puffa jackets. Yeah, saw him down at Scribes last night, didn't I. You wonder why Christie gets so hot up about the athletics writers. They weren't the ones who wrote the hunchbox stuff.

I walked around the stadium towards the hammer followers' stand. Outside, the fans were arriving and picnicking on the grass before they went in: middle-aged white couples with "I support British athletics" T-shirts, carrying little Union Jacks, the ones you've always seen on television in some distant foreign stadium through the years, waving their flags at Daley, Seb, Sally, Linford, picnicking in the sun next to black guys in

The hammer followers' stand looked like a convention for Security Personnel International

sunglasses, and schoolchildren of all colours scampering about with autograph books. A gentle, idyllic countenance infused the air. Oh gosh, I'm not taking up all your shade am I? No, man, you carry on, everything's sweet. It must be the only unmanufactured, one-nation British sport, athletics.

Things were slightly different in the hammer followers' stand, however. In fact, it looked like a convention for Security Personnel International. Scanning around for Alan Bircham, I couldn't tell who was balding or not because they all seemed to be sporting close crops and baseball caps. They were all peering grimly out at the hammer cage from under the peaks of the caps. The muscles on these men were incredible, pecs like melons, sides of beef for shoulders. And they were only the supporters. No one was discernibly cracking jokes. There was just

BEING THERE

Much of the drama at the Olympic trials did not make the headlines. The hammer, for instance. Jonathan Rendall tells the tale



the staccato murmur of stats. "When was it Paul Head did the 74.02? '94 was it?" I spotted Mick Jones immediately. Number 11, prowling around by the cage some 30 yards away. Only the photographers and the elderly officials were allowed around the cage, apart from the hammer throwers themselves. Jones was an amiable-looking giant of a man with carrot-coloured suede-head crop. He looked like how you imagined Lenny from *Of Mice and Men* would look, with a touch of Gordon Ferris, the former British heavyweight champ from Ulster, thrown in.

Jones was bigger than the other throwers, but with the suspicion of a belly. Between throws, he wandered up and down the grass strip by the cage, wining and talking to himself. He was a man who wore his emotions on his sleeve. Dave Smith was almost as big but trimmer. He was clearly following some psychological battle-plan. He had a synchronised warm-up routine and put his baseball cap on between throws. He was already in the lead, 72.58. Ahead, but not safe. Paul Head was smaller and swarther. He eschewed both the meticulous psychological build-up of Smith and the emotionalism of Jones. He just bung around between throws and then got on with it.

Time was running out to catch Smith. They were on their fourth throws out of five. Head and Jones went after Smith, so at least they knew what they had to throw. Most of the hammer followers wanted Jones to win, you could tell. The murmuring reached a mini-crescendo when he swung round on

the grass strip to face the cage and take his turn, and it was interspersed with a sort of affectionate semi-chortling, hoping he'd come good, like England football fans watching Gazza, on a microscopic scale. "Mick's got to go past his PB, y'know - 72.10. Come on, Mick."

Jones wiped the sweat from his forehead, then whirled round and let out a cordling yell as he released the hammer. It glided up and away into the blue above the stadium stands, but already Jones was shaking his head. He didn't like it. He shook his head and stamped off. He was still third, behind Head and Smith. This time he took an extended walk up the grass strip. He must have gone 70 yards. He went as far as a photographer who was perched there.

You could see Jones talking, but from that range it wasn't clear whether he was talking to the photographer or to himself. Smith took his last throw. He went through his warm-up but still looked tense. He wanted a throw that would put him safe. The hammer arched purposefully but then fell away. Smith was bent double in disappointment. Now they could still catch him. But then Head threw and was gruffly tearing off the number from his vest before the hammer had landed.

Only Jones was left. A matronly figure with grey hair in a white dress handed Jones the silver orb. Jones dangled his chain from his huge fingers like a yo-yo. He took up a position 40 yards from the cage and stared at it intently. For how many endless hours had Jones and Alan Bircham prepared for just such a moment? He walked back to-

wards it with his shoulders thrown back. The hammer exploded out from the cage. Jones liked it. The glare from the sun meant you couldn't see exactly where it had gone, but Jones had a good feeling. He punched the air and up the grassy strip his gait acquired a swagger. Jones raised his arms to the almost completely unresponsive crowd. At least the hammer followers knew what was going on. Jones, what a showman.

We waited for the MC to announce the result of the throw over the tannoy - 71.22. An improvement, but not enough for Atlanta. For a second, a hollow look crossed Jones's face. But then he shrugged and gave a rueful smile. Jones, Head and Smith exchanged Mafioso-style handshakes. The MC interviewed Smith over the tannoy. Smith said he was "quietly confident" of reaching the final in Atlanta. "Good for you, Smith, good for you," one of the baseball

Smith stood there beaming at the athletics writers. But they were looking at the track

caps said sympathetically, as if Smith had just confessed to believing in a strange religious faith.

I waited for Jones to amble over to the hammer followers' seats, but he didn't. He was ushered into a stadium tunnel by the officials. Malcolm said this must be because it was finals day, when I got back round to the press room. No problem, Malcolm said, we'd call Jones over the tannoy. "Did you see Alan Bircham?" Malcolm said. "No," I said. Malcolm said: "Oh, that's a shame. He's a real character, Alan, like Mick is."

After about 20 minutes, Dave Smith suddenly appeared with another official. Smith stood there holding his winner's cup and beaming at the athletics writers. But they were looking at the track. The track stars were limbering up and the big races would soon be on. "Someone here looking for one

of the hammer throwers?" the official said. Yes, I said, but not Dave Smith, it was Mick Jones. "Mick who?" the official said.

I went down to the changing-rooms and asked the doorman. "Oi, Mick!" he shouted. "Someone wants you!" But then a diminutive figure in a blazer shuffled out. He must have been about 50. "Sorry, mate," the doorman said. "I don't know any Mick Joneses apart from Mick here."

By now about an hour had passed. The stadium was packed. People were massed on the grassy verge opposite the stands, waiting to see Christie, Gunnell, Black and Ladejo. All the bodies blocked out the breeze. You had to stand on the steps outside the press room to get any air. Mick Jones's name had been on the tannoy four times. As well as Malcolm, the other two three As press officers were engaged in the search for Jones.

Some of the athletics writers were starting to get suspicious. What exactly did I want with this hammer thrower? "Perhaps he's at doping control?" one said quizzically. No, I said, it was nothing like that. I just wanted a chat. "What was his name again?" another asked.

"Mick Jones."

I told Malcolm and the other press officers to call off the search. It wasn't fair on them. They looked relieved. I decided to walk round the stadium one last time. Maybe I'd run into him. Well, you couldn't miss him. The deserted hammer cage loomed at one end of the stadium, a monstrous anachronism blotting out the track stars with its steel struts. I wonder if they've ever considered putting a sheet over it for decorum's sake.

The hammer followers were still there, discussing hammer technique while the 3,000m steeplechase sped past. "I kept telling him to push it in," one of them was saying, grinding his heel into the floor of the stand as if it were a hammer circle. "Push it in, I told him. But he didn't, the lad." Maybe he was Alan Bircham? But no. Well, anyway, did he know where Mick Jones had gone?

"Ah, now Mick," he said warmly. "Knowing Mick, he's probably gone home. Mick's the sort of bloke who could actually just do that."

The mourning after Italy's night of misery

It's been a beautiful few days in Italy, all blue skies and cool early morning breezes, but I don't get the impression anyone has noticed. Last weekend, there was no sign of the usual crush to get to the beaches and lakes within striking distance of the big cities.

The bars and ice-cream shops on the piazzas of small country towns were doing a fraction of their usual business, and the few people out on the streets exchanged greetings in the low tones of mourners at a funeral. Since last Friday night, when the Italian national team unexpectedly went down 2-1 to the Czech Republic at Anfield, the entire country has been in a state of shock.

Football has been the only discernible topic of conversation, at least for those feeling strong enough to talk in the first place. Like victims of a collective bereavement, the remarks have been high on over-swept emotion and low on rational analysis, an erratic parade of anger, denial, grief and fear - fear of what will happen tonight when the national team faces the unenviable challenge of having to beat Germany or

else fly home from Euro 96 in disgrace.

Can football really be this important to Italians? Yes, it can. The attitude towards Arrigo Sacchi, the team coach who dropped his two most successful players, Gianfranco Zola and Pier Luigi Casiraghi, from the starting line-up against the Czech Republic, has been little short of murderous. Saturday's *Corriere dello Sport* headlined its front page "Sacchi, you asked for this" and, in common with the rest of the press, tore apart his handling of the game step by step.

Luigi Apolloni, the Parma defender sent off for two yellow cards after an indifferent performance, has been branded public enemy number one. The silver-haired Fabrizio Ravaneli, the Juventus striker, is in the doghouse, too, because he clearly wasn't up to peak fitness on the night. And so the post-mortems have gone on, uncompromising and full of righteous indignation.

To this distinctly lukewarm follower of the game, football seems to bring out the very worst in Italy, turning the country into a nation of

SPORT IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

Defeat has sent a nation into shock. Andrew Gumbel reports from Rome

petulant teenagers who want everything to go their way all the time and grow instantly bolshy when the slightest hitch holds them up. Their moments of joy are suspiciously over-confident, their lows all slaver-ing self-pity and melodramatic recrimination.

Reading the sports press, one phrase pops inevitably into my head: *grow up*. Don't take it all so seriously. OK, so the team screwed up, but that doesn't mean the whole country has to go on hold. Actually, I've been

taking perverse pleasure in arguing Sacchi's side of the story. After all, it's not so long ago that he was lionised as the architect of Italy's glorious victory in their opening game against Russia.

Of course he had to hold Zola and Casiraghi back. I say: neither was in top physical form and their energies needed to be spared. Zola was still recovering from dysentery and Casiraghi had complained of stomach cramps in training. Yes, it was fine leaving the field without a top-flight defender after Apolloni was sent off - after all, the Italian side has struggled through far worse with 10 men before. As for the decision to play Ravaneli at less than top form, well, he had gone on to the field for Juventus in the European Cup final against Ajax last month in a similar condition and played like a dream. The fact that he didn't do the same last Friday was just bad luck.

As Sacchi himself has said: if his tactical manoeuvres had worked out, he would have been a hero. So it seems churlish and immature to blame him because the team did not live up to his expectations. The

truth is that football is a team effort. "When we win, we are all good. When we lose, the fault is collective." Go, Arrigo, sock it to them.

And so to tonight's challenge against Germany. There is a saying in Italy that the national football team always messes up when things are going well but pulls out the stops when the pressure is on. Right now, that dictum is the only thing keeping this manic-depressive excuse for a country from slipping its collective wrists. When Germany walked all over Russia on Sunday night, the reaction around here was akin to an epileptic convulsion.

If Italy win, I will have to put up with another nauseating outpouring of self-congratulatory glee. My footie-mad friends won't forgive me for saying so, but I'll be much happier if they lose. It'll bring this crazy national psychosis to a rapid, if brutal, close. I know the country will get over it, just like the country will get over its ignominious early exit from the Mexico World Cup 10 years ago. And in the meantime, I can look forward to having the beach to myself this weekend.

SPORTING VERNACULAR

No 2 BOTTLE

"I am never going to get revenge on Mr van Basten," said Tony Adams in an interview yesterday. "As he has bottled it and retired." This seemed a little unfair to Mr van Basten, who could be forgiven for thinking that he had left the field as the victor, but whatever its justice, the remark testified again to the perceived importance of "bottle" as a component in a winning psychology.

Its origins are a little obscure. Partridge notes several slang and underworld uses for the term, none of which gives an entirely clear derivation. "No bottle" could be used to mean "no good" or "useless" in the early part of this century, but that dismissive sense doesn't quite square with its on-pitch meaning, where it refers to a very specific disability - the disappearance of confrontational bravery or nerve. A player might possess every physical skill required, but if he lacks bottle, he will be unable to deploy them when things get rough. A more likely

etymology is to be found in its use as rhyming slang for "arse" (bottle and glass), a meaning that suggests a colloquially honoured connection between courage and control of the sphincter muscles. To lose your bottle may just be a marginally more decorous version of "bricking it". These are murky waters, though - in prison slang, to be "at the bottle" or a "bottle-merchant" is to be a predatory homosexual, so there is perhaps some dim memory of sexual submission in the term.

It seems most likely that it is a verbal pitch invasion - making its way into footballing talk from the terraces of the Seventies, as the game itself becomes more physically aggressive and less gentlemanly. There is no suggestion anywhere, incidentally, that it has any connection with the idea of Dutch courage or alcoholic valour, though in that sense the England team might be said to have too much "bottle" altogether.

Thomas Sutcliffe

erest

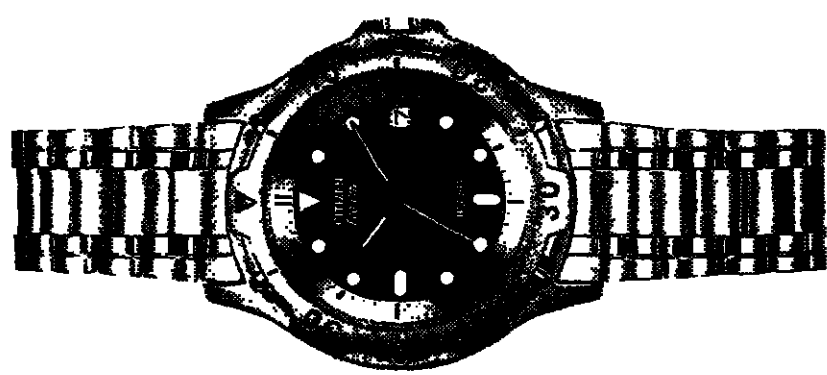
eaches Atle



It takes two to tangle: Romania's Constantin Galca (right) challenges Kiko, the Spanish striker, at Elland Road yesterday as Spain progressed to the quarter-finals

Photograph: Mark Thompson/Allsport

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Spanish eyes are smiling for Amor

JON CULLEY

reports from Elland Road
Spain 2
Romania 1

After struggling again, as they had against Bulgaria and France, to discover their true selves, Spain at last conjured a decisive show of strength to advance to the quarter-finals.

They left it late, agonisingly so for their anxious supporters, but their goal four minutes from the end, headed past Florin Prunea by the substitute Guillermo Amor, produced a result that was on balance deserved after subjecting the Romanian goal to intense second-half pressure.

It means that they and not Bulgaria go through as runners-up to France. Had they finished 1-1, Hristo Stoichkov and company would have progressed despite their defeat in Newcastle.

Jose Caminero, who scored the vital equaliser against France, was left out this time as coach Javier Clemente made four changes, bringing back Juan Antonio Pizzi, suspended after the first match, and giving the winger Javier Manjarin his first start, which he marked with a goal after 11 minutes.

There could be no complaints about its execution - a shot placed with precision by the 26-year-old, who side-footed beyond the reach of Prunea from a little inside the penalty area - even if there was good fortune in its creation. The ball ran kindly for Manjarin after a driven effort by Jose Emilio Amavisca

had struck the heel of Pizzi. What is more, it went against the run of a first half in which the Romanians did much to restore their pride. The beauty of Romania's play in that period, the measure of what the tournament will miss in their absence, was captured in the goal that levelled the score after 29 minutes.

Worked out of their own penalty area by Anton Dobos and Dan Petrescu, the ball travelled to the halfway line, where Ovidiu Stinga played the nearest of one-tos with Gheorghe Hagi near the right-hand touchline before allowing Florin Raducioiu at last to spring Spain's offside trap with a perfectly weighted pass. Raducioiu finished the move expertly, sliding the ball under the advancing Andoni Zubizarreta.

To be on terms at that stage was Romania's right, Spain hav-

ing been content to defend, allowing Romania to dominate possession while they waited for the chance to attack on the break. It was a dangerous game. Indeed, Romania might have established a clear advantage. Just before the Spaniards scored, a clever free-kick deserved better than to end in a goal-kick to Spain when Gica Popescu's shot clearly deflected wide off a defender's body.

In the second half, Spain, reshaped by three substitutions, proved a different proposition. Within minutes of the restart, Prunea was stretching to guide a dipping shot by Manjarin over his crossbar. Then he saved at close range from Amavisca, who should have scored from Alfonso's return pass.

Then Romania had Petrescu to thank for keeping them level, the Chelsea defender defying Fernando Hierro after Amor, released by Kiko on the right had crossed behind the Romanian defence.

Finally came the goal, made possible by Alfonso's mighty leap at the far post to direct Sergio's deep left-wing cross back across goal, his efforts rewarded when Amor lunged himself forward to head home.

Poor Romania had not even the consolation of a point after a tournament marred by the bitter aftermath of Dorinel Munteanu's "goal that never was" against Bulgaria. For Hagi, winning his 100th cap, the only other memento was a yellow card shown after he kicked the ball away when a decision went against him.

Seedorf hints at further disharmony

The Dutch midfielder Clarence Seedorf said prior to last night's match against England that the row in the Dutch camp after the departure of his close friend, Edgar Davids, was far from over.

"The storm hasn't died yet," Seedorf said. Dutch journalists have spoken of the squad being divided, with two major camps disputing the controversial departure of Davids.

Davids, who is moving to Milan from Ajax this summer, was sent home last weekend after openly criticising Hiddink following his omission for the Swiss game at Villa Park last Thursday.

According to reports in some Dutch papers, Seedorf's comments suggest that a wider agenda may be aired during talks with the management, with rumours of racial allegations circulating.

"I am glad the conflict has come out into the open because it has become a major issue," Seedorf said. The Sampdoria midfielder refused to comment on whether he would return home himself in support of Davids, but he warned: "The whole thing is not over yet."

The former Ajax player added that both sides were now taking the opportunity of putting their opposing views to each other. "It is on the table. We are discussing it," he explained.

In the wake of the dispute, the captain Danny Blind had urged his side not to let it distract them from their performances on the pitch. "It can be a big problem when you don't play to 100 per cent with your heart yourselves," the Ajax defender said.

EURO 96										
PREVIOUS RESULTS: Spain 2 Bulgaria 1; Portugal 1 Turkey 0; Romania 1 Turkey 0; Croatia 1 Portugal 0.										
Group A										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
England	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Netherlands	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Belgium	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Sweden	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3
Group B										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
France	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Spain	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Italy	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Germany	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3
Group C										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
Italy	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Spain	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Belgium	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Sweden	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3
Group D										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
France	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Spain	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Italy	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Germany	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3

EURO 96										
PREVIOUS RESULTS: Denmark 1 Portugal 0; Turkey 0 Croatia 1; Portugal 1 Turkey 0.										
Group E										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
Denmark	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Spain	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Italy	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Germany	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3
Group F										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
France	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Spain	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Italy	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Germany	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3

EURO 96										
PREVIOUS RESULTS: Denmark 1 Portugal 0; Turkey 0 Croatia 1; Portugal 1 Turkey 0.										
Group G										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
Denmark	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Spain	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Italy	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Germany	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3
Group H										
	P	W	D	L	Pts	Goal For	Goal Against	Goal Difference	Placed	Plays
France	3	3	0	0	9	5	2	3	1	3
Spain	2	2	1	0	5	4	1	3	2	3
Italy	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
Germany	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	-2	4	3

Playing at international level, you learn to accept some of the diving and acting. We shouldn't. This is deliberate and calculated cheating

Up until Sunday, Euro 96 was a conspicuously low-scoring tournament. The tiredness of the players may well have contributed to the veritable flood of German and Croat goals, but it is generally harder to score goals at international level now.

Teams all over Europe, and indeed the world, have become more defensively co-ordinated. Even relatively poor players installed in an organised structure can be difficult to break down.

I am not only talking about the Luxembourg and Liechtenstein. The Scotland team progressed to these finals on the same sort of defensive base, conceding only three goals in 10 qualifying games. Most teams in this competition prefer to play systems that allow one, or at best two forwards. They seek up pressure in the hope of scoring on the break. It becomes mind-numbingly tedious when both try to do it at the same time. Scotland struggled because to play that way you need pace and guile up front. Sadly, we have no Stolichev, Klinsmann or Davor Suker.

These systems invariably employ a sweeper or a third centre-back. Their popularity blossomed when managers realised that they provided the perfect means to foil the rigid and conventional 4-4-2 and 4-3-3 formations.

Amazingly, it has been the Italians under Sacchi, who have tried to employ the dated and rather British flat back four, with the midfielders pressing the opposition. Sadly for the Azzurri, it immediately looked naive against the Czech Republic, when their lack of depth was exposed to great effect for the game's first goal. Another less obvious, though no less important, reason why teams are forgoing a forward concerns the directive for stricter refereeing. Because professional fouls inevitably lead to a red card and even a mistimed tackle elicits a yellow, it is safer to defend in numbers than to trust in the tackling abilities of a skilled defender. Hence the need for extra cover at the back.

So an adoption brought in to help attackers has managed to help put

some of them out of a job in this tournament. The overzealousness of the referees demanded by Uefa has never enjoyed the full support of the players, especially in these islands. The red card shown to the Italian Apolloni against the Czech Republic managed to spoil one of the classic games of the tournament, although it continued to be an intriguing encounter. He should not have been sent off. The first yellow card was for a raised-foot challenge that had no malice in it at all.

It was also disappointing to see the Dutch coach, Gus Hiddink, having to replace Clarence Seedorf before half-time in the Swiss match, for fear that one more slightly misjudged tackle would see the talented defensive midfielder dismissed.

We are in danger of losing the art of tackling as players become understandably over wary of being booked. A fine example of the skill came from Stuart McCall in the game against the Netherlands. His last-ditch, perfectly timed lunge in the six-yard box to deny a certain



COMMENTARY

PAT NEVIN

goal was one of the most exciting moments of that game.

Players such as McCall, and indeed the whole Scottish team, will not be able to survive at international level if their terrier-like tackling is curtailed. The smaller nations' chances are also lessened by the certainty of suspensions later in the tournament. They would need a squad of 22 equally talented players to stand any chance of proceeding.

A similar situation arose in the Premier League last year. As the referees became more card happy, the wealthy teams who could afford a large, high-quality playing staff had a growing advantage over those with limited resources. The more the bookings and suspensions accumulated near the end of the season, the less the smaller clubs were capable of competing.

One of the most offensive traits in Euro 96 is that of players gesturing to the referee to use his cards, often for the most innocuous of challenges. The idea of so blatantly trying to get a fellow pro into trouble is repulsive to most British players. If it continues to happen to them, do not be surprised if our lads feel the need to fight fire with fire. However, the idea of Colin Hendry pleading with the ref to send an opponent off after the gentlest of nudges, is difficult to imagine.

Playing at international level, you learn to accept some of the diving, acting and general rolling about. We shouldn't. This is deliberate and

calculated cheating. It is far more worthy of punishment than those odd, undeliberate, mistimed challenges that seem to offend Uefa so much.

Jürgen Klinsmann became very popular in England not only because he was very talented but also because he realised that the culture of our game would not accept the excessive histrionics so prominent earlier in his career. The one-time villain adapted his game accordingly and became a hero.

Other areas that should be targeted by match officials in this championship are shirt-tugging and blocking at set-pieces. Obvious shirt-tugging isn't a problem - yellow cards are compulsory and frequent here. It is the more subtle, off-the-ball variety that has to be dealt with. In Continental football, the shirt is pulled long before the ball reaches your area. The pass invariably runs out of play or through to the goalkeeper as the defenders yank has checked the momentum of your run. Referees are blissful

ly unaware of the foul, their eyes are fixed 50 yards away at the inception of the pass.

There is a similar problem with blocking. Officials are busy watching the kick being taken and checking that the wall stays 10 yards back. Meanwhile, in the box, every run is deliberately and illegally blocked. The clique of international players laugh at the fact that this standard practice is never punished.

Every national team works on this blocking tactic in training. It is made to look as innocent and accidental as possible, but when you have suffered from it time and again, its deliberate nature becomes transparently obvious.

Maybe it is time the suits at Uefa HQ, and the referees who are their flack-catchers, started listening to the players and the players' organisations. They do not realise the complexities of what is happening on the pitch. If they accepted the input in good grace, their tweaking of the rules might start to have the desired effect of more goals and more open play.

euro-spy

EDITED BY RUPERT METCALF

Pass master will raise Rams' spirits

Before the tournament, everyone knew the name of at least one Croatian player. The defenders Igor Stivanac and Slaven Bilic were especially familiar to supporters of Derby County and West Ham, while television Italian football had ensured that Alen Boksic and Milan Zvonimir Boban needed no introduction.

Not much mention among them of Boban's midfield partner, the mope-headed Aljosa Asanovic. However, this relative obscurity will soon be left behind if the evidence of Croatia's progress in Euro 96 is not misleading.

The laser-like precision of Asanovic's long passing caught the eye more than once in the fledgling nation's opening two matches and can be expected to cause some anxiety for Portugal in Nottingham this afternoon as Croatia attempt to complete a 100 per cent record in Group D.

It was Asanovic's pass that launched Goran Visovic on the goal-scoring run that broke Turkey's hearts five minutes from the close of Croatia's championship debut at the City Ground a week ago. It was his perception and accuracy which enabled Davor Suker to complete Denmark's humiliation at Hillsborough last Sunday; the pass that dropped so invitingly for Suker to run on and lob Peter Schmeichel came from Asanovic's boot.

One man in England who had previous knowledge of these qualities was the Derby County manager, Jim Smith, who may well have pulled off the transfer coup of the summer. The much-travelled Asanovic, who has served Metz, Montpellier and Cannes in France as well as Real Valladolid in Spain, cost less than £1m from Hajduk Split. If his arrival can help Derby hold their own among the monied elite, Smith will look a shrewder manager than ever.

Jon Cullis

Bald facts hit Sacchi in the face

GUY HODGSON

Arrigo Sacchi's words in the programme for Group C are becoming more appropriate by the day. "There are two possibilities," the Italian coach said about Euro 96. "Either I shall be kissed all over my bald pate or tomatoes will be aimed at it."

As the Italians prepare for their final group match, against Germany at Old Trafford tonight, the likelihood is that any red marks left on Sacchi's head will not be lipstick. His team are in serious jeopardy of failing to reach the quarter-finals, and he could be out of a job within a few weeks.

Since the 2-1 defeat by the Czech Republic last Friday, Sacchi's compatriots have been queuing to stick the verbal knife in. Salvatore Riina, the self-styled Mafia boss of bosses, is standing trial in Florence at the moment but still took time to tell a lawyer, "Sacchi uses suicide tactics and suicide choices". Gianluca Vialli, meanwhile, has said he wants to score as many goals as possible for Chelsea just to embarrass Sacchi for leaving him out of Euro 96.

"We do not deserve to go home," Sacchi pleaded yesterday. "We have played a high standard of football. But we can't just hope to beat Germany; we must be convinced that we can do it." To reinforce that conviction, he has recalled the strikers Gianfranco Zola and Pierluigi Casiraghi while Roberto Di Matteo comes into midfield for Dino Baggio and Amedeo Carboni takes over from the

suspended Luigi Apolloni at left-back.

Sacchi knows his history and his reference to tomatoes recalls the last time Italy played in a major tournament in England in 1966 - and were pelted by supporters after an ignominious exit. Another dip into the record books is more agreeable. In 1982 the Italians began the World Cup miserably with three poor draws but ended up the winners. On that occasion the Italians needed a 1-1 draw against Cameroon to get through their qualifying group, a wholly different proposition to trying to defeat the Germans. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine opponents you would dread more under the circumstances. Particularly as Germany themselves conceivably fail to qualify although it would need a "pigs might fly" sequence of results.

For aerial bacon, the Italians would have to win 4-0, and the last time Germany suffered a loss by four goals was in the finals of the 1954 World Cup. A more realistic route to the last eight at a draw tonight and pray that the Czech Republic fail to match them against Russia at Anfield. It is a hope that was hardly enhanced yesterday by the news that Russia's top striker, Sergei Kiryakov, has been dismissed from the squad "for undermining the morale of the team", according to Oleg Romanov, the Russian coach.

Kiryakov, who plays for Germany's Karlsruhe, has scored 14 goals for Russia in 33 appearances but only came on as substitute in the 3-1 loss to Italy and



Italy's Alessandro Del Piero (left) and Pierluigi Casiraghi hone their ball skills in training yesterday

Photograph by AP

EURO 96 RIP-OFFS

No 9: Pubs near Hillsborough charged Danish fans a £1 entrance fee last Sunday. Have you come across any monster rip-offs? If so, far details to Euro-spy on 0171 293 2894.

Mrmic likes the feel of the green

Croatia's reserve goalkeeper, Marjan Mrmic, will take home a memento of Euro 96 even if he fails to make an appearance on the pitch during the tournament.

According to a Split newspaper, *Stobna Dalmacija*, Mrmic has fallen in love with English grass - and not the variety which tends to prompt Football Association suspensions.

"It simply invites you to walk on it, run on it or even throw yourself on it," Mrmic, who plays for the small provincial club Varazdin, has said. "I have decided to grow English grass in front of my house at home."

Meanwhile, Croatia's last opponents, the Danish Euro 96 squad, managed to upstake a wedding party on Saturday night. The post-nuptials disco was transferred from a function suite at the Westwood Hall Hotel to a marquee in the car park so as not to disturb the beauty sleep of the Danish players.

Judging by the result the following day, when the Danes were soundly beaten 3-0 by Croatia down the road at Hillsborough, their well-protected slumbers did not do them much good...

Japanese fans adopt Romanians

Romania's early departure from the tournament has come as a disappointment to the extent, and most unexpected, members of their fan club.

Some Japanese students enrolled at Durham University have adopted the Romanians as "their" team and have surprised both players and neutral observers with the passion of their support. More than 30 students attended one training session, many of them parading the team's yellow kit and pleading to have it autographed.

"We think they are very friendly, very nice and very handsome," one female fan, Nana Sato from Tokyo, said. "We want to support them as much as we can."

"We went to Newcastle to support the team [against Bulgaria]," Noriko Hara said. "That is where we all bought our team shirts. There are no more left in the shop now - at least not in small sizes."

Romania's defender Dan Petrescu, who plays for Chelsea, said: "It is very nice to see them here to support us. We like it because it gives some more motivation and they are very happy to see us. But I must admit, I am surprised they are so enthusiastic."

Sunderland try to tempt Lechkov

The Sunderland manager, Peter Reid, hopes to sign Bulgarian's outstanding midfielder Yordan Lechkov after the European Championship.

Lechkov, who played in all three of Bulgaria's Group B games and stood out at UEFA 94, is in dispute with his German club, Hamburg, and they have told him to find a new team. They have lined up Croatia's Robert Prosinecki, of Barcelona, as his replacement.

Lechkov has been linked with Arsenal, but Sunderland are prepared to offer £1.5m. He has the option of returning to his former club CSKA Sofia, but he is expected to move to England instead if Reid sells the lure of Sunderland to him.

The Walsall manager, Chris Nicholl, has agreed to stay with the Midlands team for another year, quelling rumours linking him with the vacancy at his old club Southampton.

The Walsall chairman, Jeff Bonser, said yesterday he was delighted Nicholl had agreed to sign another one-year contract. "He feels we have the potential to win promotion to the First Division, but it has been a long job persuading him to stay," Bonser said.

The 26-year-old goalkeeper Colin Scott has left Rangers for the chance of first-team football and a two-year contract with Bradford City.

Portuguese wary of collecting their cards

Portugal will try to join Croatia in the quarter-finals of Euro 96 by avoiding a heavy defeat against them in the closing match of Group D at Nottingham Forest's City Ground today.

It would seem an undemanding task given Croatia have already qualified for the last eight and are ready to rest several key players. However, Antonio Oliveira, the Portuguese coach, feels the fates are against his team.

The defender Paulinho Santos misses the game after collecting two yellow cards, and six other players have incurred one booking apiece - another would ban any of them from next Sunday's quarter-final.

Oliveira has accused referees of picking on his players. He said: "We have videotaped all games in the tournament so far and I can say there is a very wide difference in the criteria being used for the award of yellow cards to the Portugal national team than there is for others."

The coach also has an injury worry over the Barcelona midfielder Luis Figo, who turned an ankle in training and is having ice-pack treatment. Oliveira has other problems to contend with: he still has not found a striker who can provide the finishing touch to his team's intricate approach work.

Sporting Lisbon's Ricardo Sa Pinto has started both games but, despite a goal against Denmark, has not convinced.

He was substituted against Turkey after a head mace in the first half. Oliveira was asked if he could be tempted to recall Porto's Domingos, the leading scorer in the Portuguese championship last season, but all he would say was: "Domingos will play if the circumstances are suitable."

Davor Suker, the two-goal hero against Denmark last Sunday, is likely to be one of those rested by the Croat coach, Miroslav Blazevic, who is already without the defender Nikola Jerkan, the victim of a broken nose against Denmark. The striker Alen Boksic may return despite a throat infection which kept him out at Hillsborough.

Denmark, the holders, have only a slim chance of making the quarter-finals as they are third in the group, three points adrift of Portugal. The Danes must secure a convincing victory over Turkey at Hillsborough today and hope Croatia beat Portugal.

The Danes have injury worries over their captain, Michael Laudrup, the defender Thomas Helveg and the striker Mikkel Beck. One man likely to play his third game of the tournament is the Ipswich Town midfielder

Claus Thomsen, who has called on his country's army of fans to make an impact. "They've been superb so far, just as we knew they would, and we would love to give them something to really shout about," he said.

"We watched the video of our defeat by Croatia, but if we sat down and talked about all the mistakes we made, we would be here until Christmas," Thomsen added. "We may have only a slight chance of going through, but we are professionals and we will try our best."

Homeward-bound Turkey, whose defensive midfielder Tolunay Kafkas is suspended, are likely to field the team which started against Portugal.

PROBABLE TEAMS: PORTUGAL: Ivica Kostelic (Porto), Paulo Sousa (Lorient), Rui Costa (Florentina), Figo (Barcelona), Sa Pinto (Sporting Lisbon), Joao Pedro (Benfica).

CROATIA: Ljudevit Posavec (Zagreb), Stjepan Pletikosa (Inter Milan), Zvonimir Boban (Milan), Davor Suker (Real Madrid), Alen Boksic (Dinamo Zagreb), Robert Prosinecki (Barcelona), Robert Jarni (Dinamo Zagreb), Zoran Djindjic (Dinamo Zagreb), Zoran Djindjic (Dinamo Zagreb), Zoran Djindjic (Dinamo Zagreb).

TURKEY: Nihat Keremoglu (Beşiktaş), Necati Ersoy (Beşiktaş), Aykut Kocaman (Beşiktaş), Aykut Kocaman (Beşiktaş), Aykut Kocaman (Beşiktaş), Aykut Kocaman (Beşiktaş), Aykut Kocaman (Beşiktaş), Aykut Kocaman (Beşiktaş).

'66

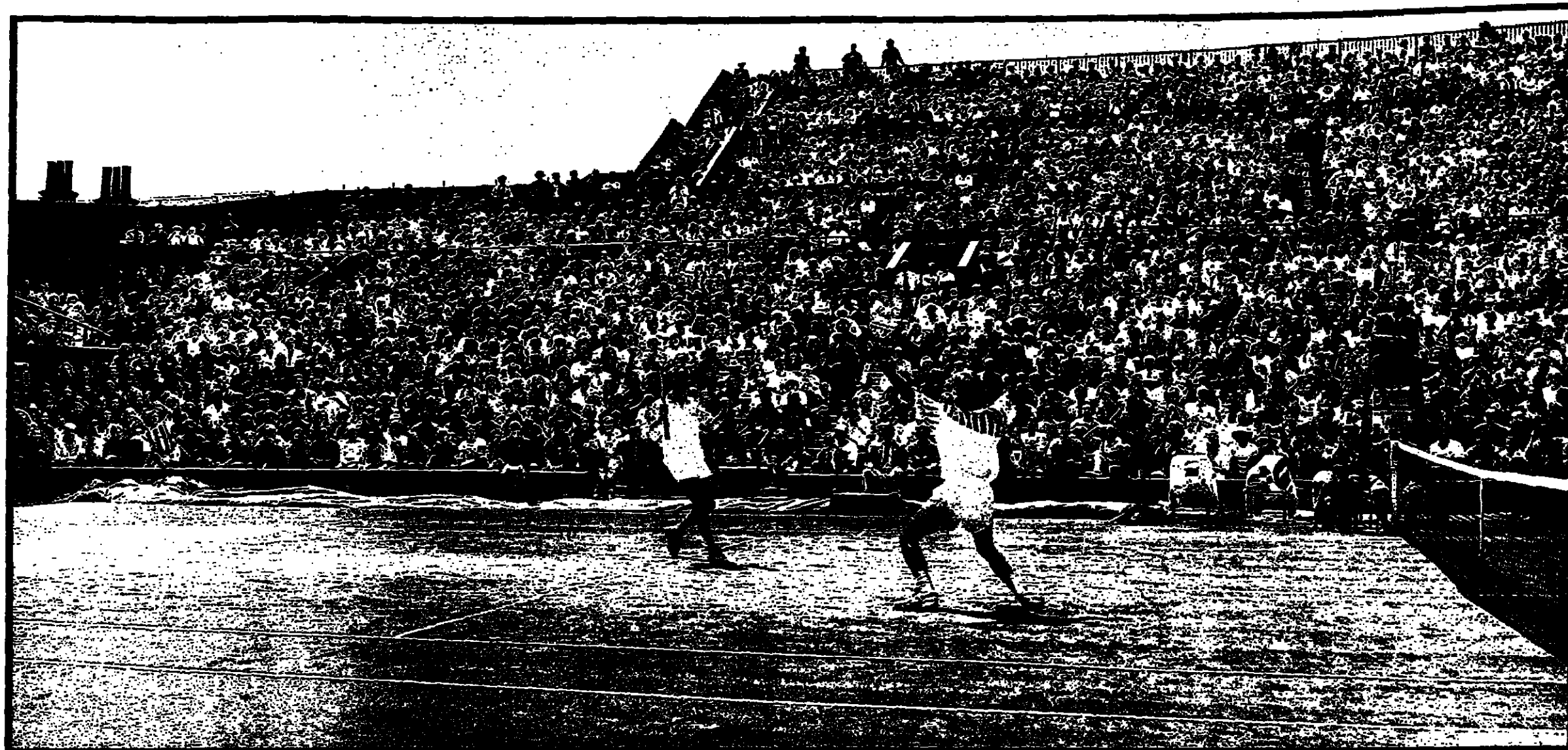
Excelsior
World Cup, 1966

LET HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF

Excelsior
Euro '96

'96

6 coming soon...wimbledon



Whitaker returns as an eager native
THE WEEK AHEAD

No 1 for all the hits

No more do I hear the sweet sound of white tennis balls flying from wooden rackets. No more do Joan Hunter Dunns flit around in Ted Tintin dresses with the odd peep of lace beneath. No more do men of grace blow kisses to pretty faces in the crowd; instead, they throw sweat-soaked shirts into a forest of eager arms.

These changes to Wimbledon came slowly, almost imperceptibly, but at the end of this year's Championships, the original Court No 1 will be obsolete. Eventually, the bulldozers will move in and in one mechanical swoop will reduce Court No 1 to a pile of anonymous rubble, to be dumped who-knows-where. Memories are not so easily demolished.

Although it did not have a Royal Box and was destined to be a semi-detached poor relation to the mansion next door, Court No 1 had a life and an atmosphere of its own. Seldom did a day's play pass that the great cheers of its loyal devotees did not echo around the Centre Court, and make 12,000 people think that they were in the wrong place.

They often were, and never more so than in the first Championships after the war in 1946. The frustration must have been excruciating as they sat in their seats and listened to the rapturous applause from the place next door. For it was on Court No 1 that the sad-faced Jaroslav Drobny, whose native Czechoslovakia was only just free from occupation, was beating the clean-cut US Marine Jack Kramer.

The American had conceded only five games on his way to the fourth round, was the No 2 seed and the public favourite to take the title at his first attempt. After one of the most thrilling matches played on any court, Drobny won by 2-6, 17-15, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3. The drama was not confined to the power produced from Drobny's left arm, for at the change of ends it was obvious that Kramer was in serious trouble.

He was suffering from an injured hand. What started with small blisters had developed into a raw wound by the end of the 32-game second set. There were no chairs on court, no two-minute rest periods in those days, so at each opportunity Kramer snatched a few forbidden seconds to try to soften the path with sticking plasters. Af-

terwards he made no excuses and merely said that the best man on the day had won. In my demob suit, and green pork-pie hat with a red feather, this was my first Wimbledon as a Fleet Street junior reporter, and I had been assigned to Court No 1.

Seeing "things" were happening, I left my press seat and got myself a place behind the umpire's chair, where I could see Kramer's plight and almost feel his pain. I wrote my story full of blood, guts, colour and quotes. I was proud of what was to be my first big Wimbledon byline, but when I showed my copy to my sports editor, who had been on the Centre Court, he said: "Sonny, this is too good for you," and with a few minor changes it appeared in the paper next morning under his name. Kramer and I learned a lot that day.

Although the court was a semi-detached poor relation to the mansion next door, it had a life and an atmosphere of its own

In the quiet hours when the music is soft and the whisky mellow, memories, so many memories, of the doomed court where our youthful summers drifted into old age come flooding back. There was the laughter when Connors and Nastase appeared in the doubles with umbrellas when it threatened to rain; and there was McEnroe. How the Court hated him in 1981. People thought then that he should have been disqualified, some still do. He screamed at the umpire: "You are the pits." He insulted the referee, and he yelled at the crowd: "I am so disgusting you shouldn't watch. Everybody leave." This was a first-round match against nice guy Tom Gullikson. Instead of packing his bags, as he should have done, he won the Championship so preventing Bjorn Borg winning a record six in a row.

Eleven years later, when McEnroe had won the singles title three times and the dou-

Wimbledon's second most famous court will stage its final dramas in the next fortnight. Laurie Pignon salutes a cherished battleground

bles twice, all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune were forgotten and Court No 1 was in love with him again. It was a roaring, boisterous, bellowing love when with Michael Stich he returned on the third Monday to finish his doubles final.

When play had stopped at 9.22pm on Sunday night, the score stood at 13-13 in the final set after four and a half hours of play. Although the match could have ended in a few minutes, many McEnroe fans queued all night for the finish. When their final resumed against Jim Grabb and Richey Reneberg, the court was full to its 7,500 capacity, with everyone getting in free of charge.

Ten more games were played in 34 minutes before McEnroe and Stich won 5-7, 7-6, 3-6, 7-6, 19-17. The total of 83 games in five hours, one minute was a record for a Wimbledon doubles final. In response to the crowd, McEnroe and Stich repeated their lap of honour, and the biggest cheer came when John offered the trophy to his son, who was at courtside with his mother, Tatum O'Neal. A moment poignant for a couple who were soon to part.

Boris Becker's memories of Court No 1 in 1987 are "nicht so schön", and it was probably his own fault. At 19, he had twice won the Championship and he was up against Peter Doolan, a little-fancied Australian whom he had defeated with ease at Queen's Club a couple of weeks previously.

Doolan didn't fancy his chances, either. He was staying at the local YMCA and had booked his flight out of England, but, like all good Aussies, he loved a fight when the stakes were high. Rain had delayed this second round match until Friday afternoon. At first, Becker seemed to be a victim of his own arrogance, which hardly endeared him to the crowd, who hungered for a big upset. And they got it, for the fiery, scrobbatic German was beaten 7-6, 4-6, 6-2, 6-4, and the roar of the crowd echoed around an envious Centre Court. Afterwards, a still angry Becker told the world's press: "Of course I am disappointed, but

I didn't lose a war. There is no one dead; it was just a tennis match."

There were not too many tears shed for Becker, but I must admit there was a hint of a Puccini drama when Chrissy Evert was beaten 6-1, 7-6 by Kathy Jordan in the third round. It was the first time in 11 Wimbledon that she failed to reach the semi-finals. The sun did not shine on Court No 1 that day and her unexpected exit made the place seem a little duller and a little greyer. The year was 1983.

Chrissy is not a Mini and not quite a Musetta. Watching from the sideline, and at times almost close enough to touch her, I felt as if I were in a world of bad dreams. I had seen her lose before, but this time she was a thin ghost of the player normally feared by her contemporaries. She looked pale and frail, yet offered no word of excuse, only praise for Miss Jordan. Afterwards, we discovered that she had been ill during the night and a doctor had to be called out at 2am.

Even before the South African Billie Jean King shocked Wimbledon in 1972 by appearing on court minus stockings, fashion has always been a feature of lawn tennis, and the most glamorous of all events was the now defunct Wightman Cup. This annual match between the British and American women was played on Court No 1 from 1946 to 1972.

Andrew Lloyd Webber could have written a musical about it, Monet could have painted it in three shades of light and Shelley would have certainly composed an ode about it, for the great West Open Stand which over the years grew taller and taller was festooned with colour and was a wondrous sight to behold.

There were rows upon rows of girls in summer uniform dresses; some schools in pink, others in blue, or green, or yellow or lilac. There were panama hats galore, and a few battered boaters beside, but all wore regulation white socks and "sensible" shoes.

They may have looked like a wall of in-

nocent flowers reaching up to that tent of blue, but once they were out of reach of their games mistresses, and play began, decorum was replaced by such a cacophony of screams of delight that local residents might have thought that pig-sticking had come to SW19. Their enthusiasm was so infectious that those in the posh seats joined in and felt young again.

Baron de Coubertin's aristocratic and now completely ignored Olympic creed of it being more important to take part than to win might have been penned for the British teams, for during all those summers on Court No 1, they were only successful in the Wightman Cup on three occasions. Then the atmosphere was such that I am surprised we didn't all drown in our own euphoria.

When McEnroe had won the singles three times and the doubles twice, all was forgotten and Court No 1 was in love with him again

Never more so than in 1958, when we broke the spell of 28 years of failure and the girl who made it possible was Christine Truman, who won all three of her matches. Her staggering victory over Althea Gibson after dropping the first set was one of the greatest women's matches played on the court. Christine was 17 and Miss Gibson the reigning Wimbledon champion. She was the first black champion: powerful, athletic, she played every stroke as if the pride of her African heritage depended upon it. In contrast, Christine, the sweetheart of British tennis, was never quite sure what the score was and kept basking her mighty forehead willy-nilly. The innocence of Christine was all too much for the American.

Two years later, Britain again defeated the United States, 4-3. This time Ann Haydon, who as Mrs Jones was to become Wimbledon Champion nine years later, and

Angela Mortimer (the 1961 Champion) were in the winning line-up. By Jove! We could play the game in those golden days. The last successful year on Court No 1 was 1968, when Virginia Wade (the 1977 Centenary Champion) cast aside all her theatrical uncertainties and produced a masterly display of controlled arrogance which, when in full flight, made her one of the most enthralling and at times exasperating players to watch.

At 1-3 on the start of the second day's play, Britain's chances seemed hopeless. Miss Wade made it 2-3 with her second singles and 3-3 with her doubles with Winnie Shaw. Then came the final dramatic crunch: the Truman sisters, Christine and Nell, against Stephanie DeFina and Kathy Harter. There has never been a match like it nor will there be one like it again. Winners were hit off the wood, outrageous mis-hits clipped the lines, and rallies were so hectic that they might have been playing on hot coals.

At one vital and hilarious point, I dropped and broke my expensive calabash pipe, and in the excitement a man in the far stand had a heart attack and died. Someone was heard to remark: "He might have waited until the change of ends." It was getting dark and damp during that final agonising game during which our dear Christine twice fell flat on the court. The normally solid American girls were bewildered by it all; and the crowd bewitched.

Unlike fading photographs, memories become brighter with age, and I would not swap mine for a fistful of tomorrow. Goodbye, old friend, I hope that your elegant replacement, minus free standing, brings as much pleasure as old Court No 1, a place of so many youthful dreams that bulldozers cannot destroy.

Laurie Pignon reported from Wimbledon for the first time 30 years ago and has not missed a Championship since.

Picture: John McEnroe (left) and Michael Stich celebrate after their epic victory over Richey Reneberg and Jim Grabb in the 1992 Wimbledon men's doubles final after five hours and one minute's play spread over two days on No 1 Court. Photograph: David Ashdown

Can Wimbledon bring the best out of Agassi again?



All right in white: despite Paris, motivation will not be a problem in SW19. Photograph: David Ashdown

As the Big W looms, the Big Wonder is on. What has happened to Andre Agassi?

At the French Open last month, overweight and unmotivated, he was well beaten in the second round by a journeyman called Christopher Woodruff. Sporting his latest look (the Bruce Willis cueball coiffure), Agassi had died easy, rolled into a side pocket - and he didn't want to talk about it.

Ducking the mandatory press conference brought a \$2,000 fine, but he could not avoid the question that has come to dominate the tennis season: has the Glitz Kid become the Skids Kid?

Thus far, Agassi is having as bad a year as John Major and Bob Dole, as flat as his belly isn't. Search the record for a really good win, and you find one: a January rebound from 0-2 in sets to beat Jim Courier at the Australian Open. Then only to lose despondently to Michael Chang while blaming the wind.

A first-round loss to Luke Jensen at Memphis must have been a dive worthy of Greg Louganis.

Agassi has won one tournament - the Lipton - because the other finalist, Goran Ivanisevic, woke up that day with a neck as inflexible as his on-court thought

processes and quit after a few unproductive swats.

What are the reasons for this mid-tennis-life malaise? His rival Pete Sampras thinks it dates back nine months to the September afternoon at Flushing Meadows when he defeated Agassi as the US champion, 6-4, 6-3, 4-6, 7-5. Maybe even to "The Point" - their brilliant all-court give-and-take, point-and-counterpoint barrage that Agassi seemed to win several times as it lengthened. Yet it concluded on Sampras's roaring crosscourt backhand on the 19th stroke.

It has been a bad year, but the champion of '92 may yet surprise his critics, writes Bud Collins

That was a stroke of doom, closing the first set. Later, scripted as the unkillable point, it was reconstructed and preserved as a droll, memorable Nike commercial, now more renowned than the match itself. "Andre hasn't been quite the same since then," Sampras said. "Something seemed

to go out of him. But you can't write him off. He's still got the best forehand, the best backhand, the best return of serve that I've been up against."

Pancho Segura, who coached Agassi briefly, shakes his head. "Too much money. It's a shame he's wasting all that talent. For a while, he got it straight, but now he doesn't seem to know what's more important - competitiveness or commercials. He isn't keeping them in the right perspective."

Not that everyone regards Agassi as in permanent decline. One friend said: "Andre's an every-other-year guy: '92 Wim-

bledon, '94 the Open, and '96 will be big yet." His talbot, the Nike tennis rep Ian Hamilton, agreed. Conceding that Agassi was not ready for Paris, he said: "Andre will come into Wimbledon concentrating. He's one guy I don't worry about here. This is major major. Remember what Wimbledon means to him. They said he'd never win a Grand Slam, and in '92 he was the most unlikely of all Wimbledon. He'll be eager, all right."

Agassi's coach, Brad Gilbert, the author of *Winning Ugly*, a how-to-tennis treatise, saw his pupil losing ugly in the French Open and shrugged. "Just a bad day at the office." But Centre Court isn't another office. It's the executive suite.

Agassi, who turned down invitations to the US team in 1988 and 1992, has inside much of his desire for an Olympic gold medal, pointing himself toward Atlanta. But, thanks to his early departure from Paris, he's had nearly a month to re-tool. His trainer, Gil Reyes, says a different Andre will be unveiled when the Championships begin.

We can only wait and wonder. That's the eternal mystique of Andre, he of the shaggy hair. Even when you can get the boy out of Vegas, you can't get Vegas out of the boy.

AN ENDURING AFFAIR: WHAT AGASSI SAYS AT WIMBLEDON



There's enough

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Whitaker returns as an eager native

THE WEEK AHEAD

David Byas is not the only Yorkshire-born captain who believes he is leading a side capable of winning the County Championship.

The other is James Whitaker, an exile throughout his professional career, who will not lack motivation when he arrives with his Leicestershire troops at the Park Avenue ground in Bradford tomorrow.

When he agreed last winter to take over from Nigel Briers, the match against Yorkshire was the first he wanted to find in the season's programme. Born in Skipton, Whitaker, 34, recalls frequent trips to the Leeds nets as a precociously talented teenager, encouraged by his father, head of the family's speciality chocolates business, who had no sweeter dream than to see his son defending the county's honour at Headingley.

Unfortunately for Whitaker senior, the boy's talents were not appreciated until he was installed at Uppingham School and making an impression on Leicestershire. He was recommended unhesitatingly to them by their former player Maurice Hallam, who was Uppingham's cricket master.

Divided loyalties can be discounted. Indeed, should he do something memorable over the next few days it would not be the first time he has been inspired to do so in opposition.

In the autumn of 1995, pressed into service by an injury to Briers, he had the good fortune to lead Leicestershire against Yorkshire. Not only was he moved to score his first Championship century for two years, he also plotted a 74-run victory.

He has no doubt he has a side equipped to unseat his native county. "We have a well-balanced team with bags of ability and a great spirit," he said. "If you look at our record over the last few seasons we have always been among the leading sides and we are good enough to challenge for the title."

Tomorrow, Leicestershire must manage without Alan Mullally, one of the architects of that 1993 victory, and face a Yorkshire side full of confidence after defeating Warwickshire at Headingley to stretch their Championship lead to 14 points. In their current mood, Michael Bevan, Michael Vaughan and Tony McGrath could take some containing, while Darren Gough is rediscovering his form at just the right time – not quite ready for England and eager to fire for his county.

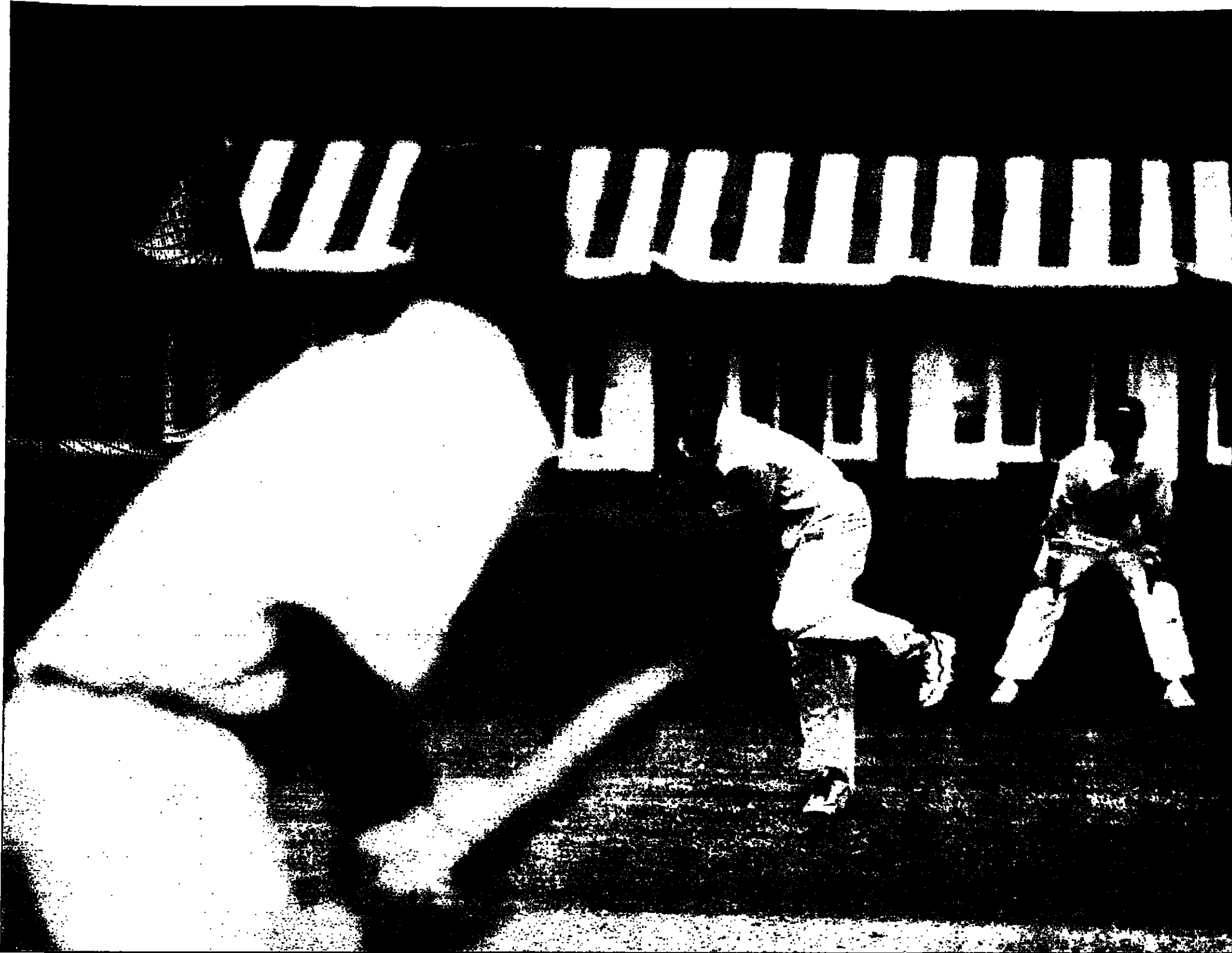
For their part, the Midlands side need to restore their self-belief after being mauled twice by Surrey, in the Championship and the Sunday League, in which they were bowled out for 48.

Elsewhere, Kent, whose hopes of keeping Yorkshire within touching distance were frustrated by a resurgent Middlesex at Canterbury, will not win points easily at Warwickshire, who can be expected to react to their second Championship defeat of the season with renewed vigour.

It has taken only a small bite in the champions' normally steady upward climb to bring the individual quality of their players – as opposed to their team – into question. In the past, nothing has motivated them more.

A fascinating encounter is in prospect at Derby, where the home side, forcefully led by Dean Jones and with Devon Malcolm coming out of his understandable slump, begin two points behind third-placed Middlesex. As a first success, Surrey's defeat of Leicestershire was overdue. They lose Chris Lewis, Graham Thorpe and Alec Stewart but will hope to build on the gain against struggling Durham at Stockton, where they might also give their Sunday League prospects a lift before concentrating on a match with a touch of Euro 96 about it, against the Netherlands in the NatWest Trophy on Tuesday.

Jon Copley



Flight of fancy: Min Patel, England's left-arm spinner, practises his art under the watchful gaze of the former England wicket-keeper Alan Knott at Lord's yesterday

Photograph: Howard Boylan

At 10.30 on Monday morning, Min Patel is scoffing biscuits at Canterbury like there's not only no tomorrow but not much left of today. Everything is happening for him at the moment, and he is one hungry cricketer.

A fortnight ago, he made his Test debut at Edgbaston for England against India, the country of his birth. Tomorrow, it's Lord's. On Monday, it was Middlesex at the St Lawrence ground and Patel's left arm was ready for a long bowl. In the event, however, Middlesex forced a draw and he drove off in his brand new Renault Laguna, doubtless dreaming about bowling Sachin Tendulkar, first ball, neck and crop.

He is only 25 years old, but it has been a long wait for Min Patel. After making his first-class debut for Kent when he was 19 and still at Dartford Grammar School, his career has already been interrupted enough times for a less determined mind to wander. First of all, he went to Manchester for three years to gain an economics degree. Then, when he returned, he injured his right knee so badly he was restricted to just a handful of matches in 1993.

The following year was his real breakthrough. He finished as leading wicket-taker in the country, with 90 first-class wickets, and was on the verge of a call-up to the England squad on more than one occasion.

Interestingly, in the light of Raymond Illingworth's comments at the weekend about England needing to select players at 22 or 23, Patel was overlooked. Despite his record, there was a belief that his bowling was slightly too negative and Yorkshire's Richard Stemp was preferred.

Patel near the end of pilgrimage to Lord's

England's latest left-arm spinner had to wait a long time to get his first taste of Test cricket. Now he is desperate for more. Adam Szreter talked to him

Patel was chosen instead for that winter's A tour to India and Bangladesh. His international career finally seemed to have started, but after an indifferent season last year, he was omitted from the winter's A tour to Pakistan. Now, though, he has finally tasted the real thing.

"It was fantastic," he said. "The atmosphere was incredible. You always dream about it, then when you're actually out there... it wasn't an anti-climax at all. It lived up to everything I expected. Playing in front of a big crowd every day, with TV cameras and everything. The first one went very quickly for me – it seemed to start and finish so fast – but I enjoyed every moment of it."

He did have one reservation: being asked to field at short leg. "I can't say I was too keen on it, but someone had to do it. The two other new guys [Alan Mullally and Ronnie Irani] were both tall fast bowlers, so they felt that the little short-arse spinner might be the best man to put in there. So there I was."

Patel was born in Bombay and lived there until he was five, when his father decided to move to Eng-

land. "We came, the whole family, lock, stock and barrel. Me and my brothers. My father just felt that we would benefit from a Western education, particularly an English education. We initially went to Essex and lived in Ilford for a year, then we settled around the Dartford area.

had Embers [John Emburey] out there, Phil Neale was the manager. John Barclay was the tour manager. That's been my only England tour so far, but if that was anything to go by they should all be brilliant because the atmosphere and the team spirit, it was fantastic – pretty much like

'You always dream about your first Test and it lived up to everything I expected. It wasn't an anticlimax at all – I enjoyed every moment of it'

where we've been for about 20 years now.

"I've been back to India on holiday a couple of times, mainly to Bombay, but the A tour there was a real eye-opener. We got to see a lot of the country, all sides of it. I loved the tour. It was great from the cricket point of view, and from the learning about India point of view.

"The guys got on fantastically well, the management was superb. We

the first Test at Edgbaston, really.

Just a really good vibe in the dressing-room, a really good buzz.

"It was disappointing not to get on last winter's A tour, but the selectors obviously had their reasons. I personally felt I didn't do myself justice last season, so if I haven't done myself justice, I can't expect to go on tour. Simple as that. This season, hopefully, I can put things right."

Like all good craftsmen, Patel strives for perfection, works hard at his technique and welcomes constructive criticism. Perhaps mindful of bowling too negatively, he found last season that he had gone a little too far the other way.

"I spoke to Embers midway through last year, and he said I was bowling a bit slower than I had the year before, probably because you could get away with that in India, where the wickets are more helpful. So I came back and bowled a better pace in the last half of the season. It wasn't a radical change of action or anything, just changing my pace a little." Patel, as you might expect, has thought deeply about his craft, and – as opposed to the black-and-white images so beloved of the critics – can see the full spectrum. Negative and positive; over the wicket; fast and slow; leg stump and into the rough.

"It depends on what wickets you're playing on, where you're playing and who you're playing against. Everything comes into consideration," he said. "On turning wickets against players who don't

play spin very well, obviously you can get away with bowling a lot slower and teasing them out. Good players use their feet, and on flat wickets you still have to use a little bit of flight and you've also got to have a good change of pace. I think. You just want to keep them guessing as much as anything else."

"The worrying thing from a finger-spinner's point of view is that all the leading spinners in the world at the moment seem to be wrist spinners: Shane Warne, Anil Kumble, Mush-taq Ahmed. A wrist-spinner will generally tend to turn the ball more than a finger-spinner, whereas a finger-spinner arguably has more control. But there aren't very many leading finger-spinners in world cricket at the moment, which is a shame. Obviously, with all these top-class leg-spinners, you are going to get lots of kids trying to bowl leg-spin, which is fantastic for the art of spinning, but hopefully it won't make the job of the finger-spinner redundant."

There is a chance that Patel will be redundant at Lord's and that England might opt for an all-seam attack, but he is optimistic that he will at least make the final XI.

"Obviously, we'll have to wait till we get down there and look at the track. At Edgbaston, everyone had anticipated an all-seam attack, but the pitch looked like it was going to wear. In the event, it didn't and I was largely redundant as a bowler. But in county cricket, whenever I've played at Lord's it's always been helpful in the latter stages of the match. If I can win a Test match at Lord's it will be an incredible feeling."

If an England spinner were to win a Test match anywhere, it would be an incredible feeling for everyone.

There has been too much chopping and changing, not enough patient nurture of players with obvious class

Two verdicts have been delivered on Raymond Illingworth in the past week. The much-heralded one from the TCCB disciplinary committee is reported by Derek Pringle on page 2. The other was less expected, and has gone largely unnoticed, but is in many ways more interesting.

It came in a newspaper article published last Friday by Ted Dexter, Illingworth's predecessor as chairman of the England selectors. Dexter has been a dignified ex-chairman, going back to the day job he did before (public relations), while refraining from the lucrative sideline (commentating and writing), on the grounds that it was better not to comment on his successor's performance.

He broke that rule because of two remarks in Illingworth's book, *One-Step Committee*. Ily wrote that he had "inherited very little" from Dexter, and had therefore been able to "begin with a clean sheet and impose

different selection policies". These words so stuck in Dexter's gullet that he showed two hidden sides of his personality: an entertaining bitchiness and an interest in statistics.

"Our plain-speaking leader," he wrote, "has shuttled from selector to team manager and back again without any properly defined new selection policy whatever. And if there has been a new face or two in the England team, it is extraordinary how quickly they have withered on the vine and been replaced, not by new blood but by the same old faces as before..."

"The facts suggest that the current chairman has in reality been groping along from match to match, picking from a pool of players ill-adapted to Test cricket and dogged by injuries galore in much the same way as I was forced to do, and indeed, Peter May before me."

"He [Ily] may not have inher-

ed much from me, but why should anyone expect an inheritance anyway? Had England been holding the Ashes and the World Cup, I would still be doing the job. It is in the nature of things that each chairman starts on a low note..."

"So to the single player of stature to emerge during Illingworth's time, Dominic Cork. I saw him bowl for England Under-19 at Taunton in 1989. I sent him on three of his four A team tours and personally visited them. Cork made his debut for England at 24 and was immediately successful. I call that a major inheritance."

Strong stuff, and all supported with detail of the kind that Dexter's critics used to say he could not grasp. He reminds us that Illingworth's first act was to drop five of the heroes of Barbados '94 (Thorpe, Lewis, Russell, Caddick and Tufnell) in favour of Gooch, White, Rhodes,



TIM DE LISLE

DeFreitas and Such. Two years later, none of these five is still on the scene, while three of the five discarded are back and doing well.

Dexter was regarded with scepticism by many players, who found him distant. A common reaction to Illingworth is "at least he knows the players' names". And sure enough, in making the point just mentioned, Dexter wrote Tufnell when he meant Such, and Such when he meant

Tufnell. (Luckily, he didn't attempt many first names.) No doubt he did see Cork bowl for England Under-19, but if it was at Taunton in 1989, Wisden must have got the venues wrong. He also listed the ages at which various current players have made their debuts and slipped up once or twice: Crawley 23 instead of 22, Ramprakash 22 instead of 21.

But this doesn't mean his general thrust is wrong. He is surely right that Illingworth has never had a clear policy. Whether this matters is another matter. Ily is a pragmatist, not a policymaker, and the job description changed subtly when he took it on – Dexter was chairman of the England committee, with wider responsibilities (which he discharged very well).

And he is right that many of Ily's selections have been bad. Dropping Thorpe in 1994 was a howler. In his book, Ily pins the blame on Mike

Atherton, who wanted Crawley; but they should have both been in the team, and would have been if Ily had not been besotted with Craig White.

Dexter's figures show clearly that he tended to give debuts to younger men than Ily has. (Though if you use 29 players in a series, as Dexter did against the Australians in 1989, some of them are bound to be young.) Ily is not good at taking criticism, but this penny appears to have dropped: within two days of Dexter's piece appearing, he was saying to a reporter that he would like to see younger players coming through quicker. He blamed the counties: young stars like Alex Tudor of Surrey "only seem to get the odd game and nothing more". Here he goes again, blaming someone else; but this time it's fair enough. The counties are far too inclined to let old codgers hang around, and not inclined enough to give youth its head.

Ily will be chairman of selectors for only another two and a half months. He has made many baffling choices (the year-long preference for Rhodes over Russell; McCague and Benjamin for Australia in 1994-95; White, passim) and some inspired ones (Gough, 1994, Cork in 1995).

The best thing that has happened to England recently is David Lloyd, whose appointment Ily opposed. The second-best is Nasser Hussain, whose recall Ily set in motion by making him a team captain. There has been too much chopping and changing, not enough patient nurture of players with obvious class – Ramprakash, Crawley, Tufnell, Lewis. The upshot has been a results sheet on which spectacular highs alternate with spectacular lows. Dexter's right; they have a lot in common.

Tim de Lisle is editor of *Wisden Cricket Monthly*.

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F1
RACING

FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



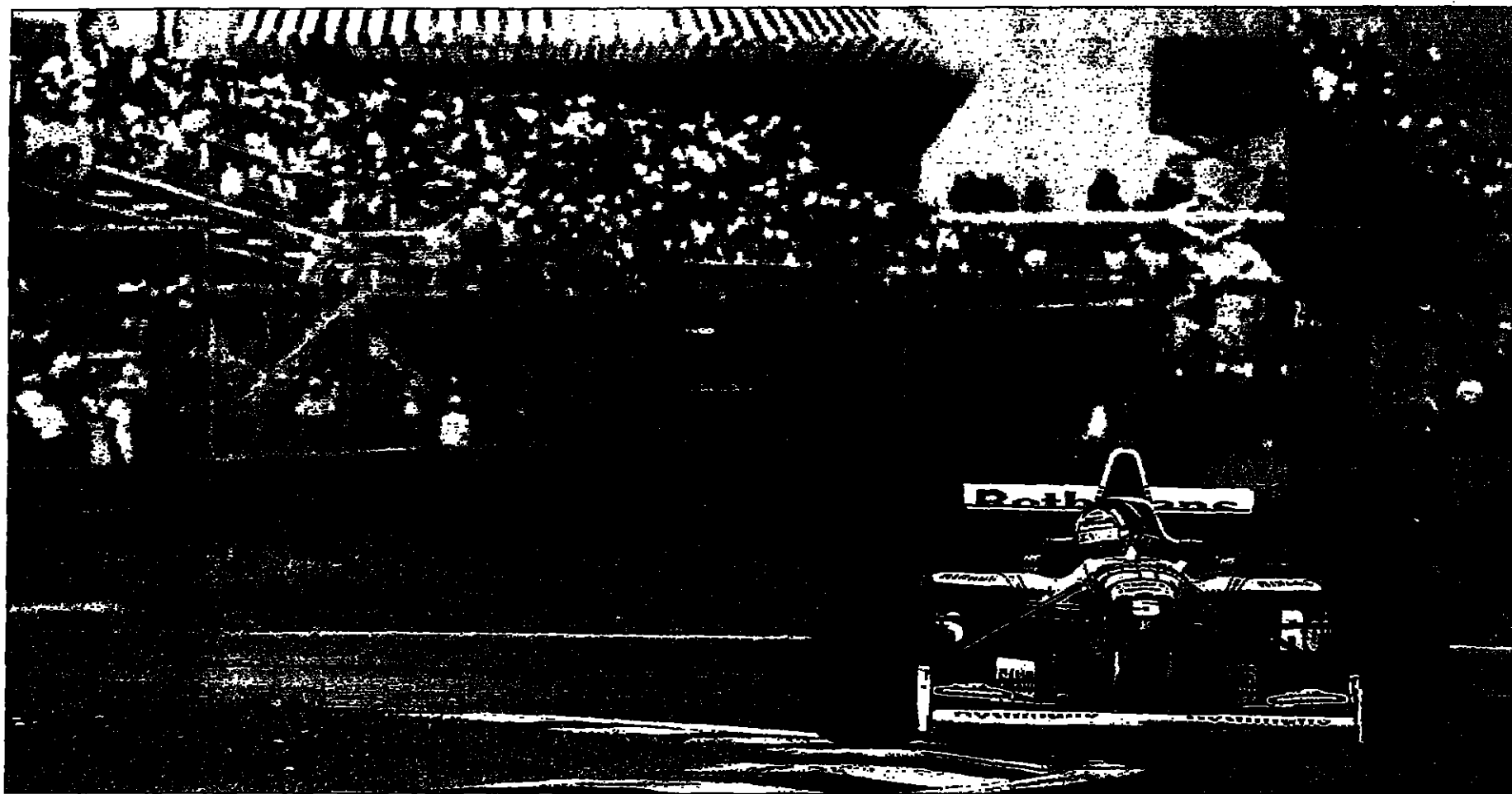
**GRAND PRIX
'96 RACE
SCHEDULE**

French GP
June 30
British GP
July 14
German GP
July 28
Hungarian GP
August 11
Belgian GP
August 25
Italian GP
September 8
Portuguese GP
September 22
Japanese GP
October 13

Team
Position
Check Line:
0891 891
806

Results &
Top 50
Teams:
0891 891
807

Coils cost 39p per
minute cheap rate,
49p per minute at all
other times.
Rules are as
previously published
and are available on
request.



No one else in sight: Damon Hill leaves his pursuers far behind on the way to victory at the Canadian Grand Prix

Photograph: Claire Mackintosh/Empics

The latest scores and results

What a shame that Dream Team managers can't afford Damon Hill and a Williams chassis: the combination was absolutely dominant in Canada and driver and chassis lead their respective Dream Team tables by a country mile. But the weekend was another expensive one for Ferrari fans: a big fat 0 for Michael Schumacher and – even worse – a nasty -5 for his team-mate Eddie Irvine.

Plaudits to Jacques Villeneuve for a fine drive on the circuit named after his late father. He is developing into the ideal number two to Hill: quick, tidy and reliable. Setting the fastest lap of the race was a nice gesture, and the five Dream Team points will come in handy too.

Hill swept most of the other maximum scores available, Top of the Top Six, Top of the Warm-up Top Six, Quickest Pit-Stop and Pole Position bonus. Can you afford not to have this man in your team?

Hill and Villeneuve aside, the best performer was Martin Brundle, who has been outperformed so far this season by his team-mate and fellow £10m man, Rubens Barrichello. The other £10m driver, Johnny Herbert, was another pricey driver improving on a slow start to the season – he's now gaining fast on his more expensive team-mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who seems to have been rattled by the Englishman's new-found pace. Points, too, for the McLaren pair, off the pace but reliable,

and for the Monaco hero Olivier Panis, who seems to be making a habit of being fast in the morning warm-up before the race: they must brew particularly strong coffee in the Ligier motor-home.

Sunday was the East Anglian's 150th grand prix, and he celebrated with one of his most impressive drives for years, full of aggression and

raw speed. A little too aggressive, if anything, for just as he was looking like the quickest man around, and had the beating of the McLarens, he swiped the nose of his Jordan off against the back end of Pedro Lamy's revolving Minardi. But sixth was some consolation, and Martin will feel confident now that he has what it takes to challenge his quick team-mate Barrichello.

But the most heartening Dream Team points scorer is also the most unexpected: a representative of the Nightmare Team, Minardi: Giancarlo Fisichella, who managed, for once, to avoid driving into his



DRIVER OF THE DAY: MARTIN BRUNDLE

Grand Prix Shopping List

POINTS SCORED

DRIVERS	POINTS	POINTS
1 M Schumacher	0	117
2 J Alesi	15	97
3 D Hill	36	194
4 G Berger	0	52
5 D Coulthard	19	68
6 E Irvine	-5	48
7 J Villeneuve	26	126
8 M Haldinen	14	76
9 H H Frentzen	-1	43
10 M Brundle	22	38
11 R Barrichello	4	51
12 J Herbert	8	41
13 M Salo	0	46
14 P Lamy	0	20
15 P Diniz	0	57
16 U Katayama	-4	5
17 J Verstappen	-2	5
18 O Panis	2	74
19 L Badoer	0	-6
20 R Rosset	-3	5
21 A Montemini	0	-3
22 G Fisichella	8	3
23 V Sospiri	0	0
24 T Marques	0	5
25 F Lagorce	0	0
26 H Noda	0	0
27 T Inoue	0	0
28 M Brundell	0	0
29 J-C Boullion	0	0
30 K Brack	0	0
31 K Burt	0	0
32 E Collard	0	0
33 N Fontana	0	0
34 D Franchitti	0	0
35 N Larini	0	0
36 J Magnussen	0	0
37 A Prost	0	0
38 G Tarquini	0	0
39 K Wendlinger	0	0

CHASSIS	POINTS	POINTS
40 Benetton	16	92
41 Williams	20	133
42 Ferrari	-5	95
43 McLaren	14	94
44 Sauber	10	44
45 Jordan	13	42
46 Ligier	0	59
47 Tyrrell	-4	25
48 Arrows	-3	-11
49 Minardi	11	-8
50 Forti	-1	-8

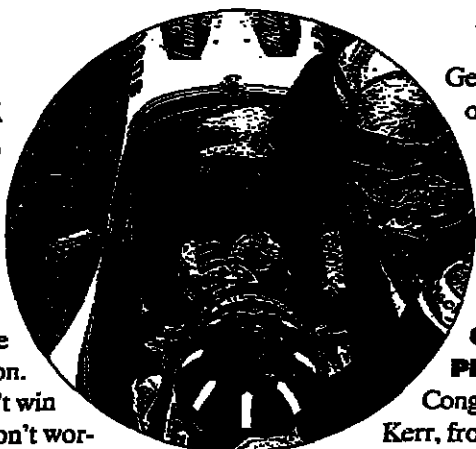
ENGINES	POINTS	POINTS
51 Renault	20	136
52 Ferrari	0	110
53 Mercedes	16	111
54 Peugeot	14	57
55 Mugen	0	91
56 Ford V10	13	64
57 Yamaha	0	39
58 Hart	0	13
59 Ford Zetec V8	0	0
60 Ford ED V8	12	34

WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize – a drive in a 650bhp F1 car. You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

INDIVIDUAL GRAND PRIX PRIZES STILL TO BE WON

You can enter our Formula 1 Dream Team game at any time during the grand prix season. Even if you don't win our top prize, don't worry, there are still prizes to be won with each grand prix race. Enter for the French Grand Prix and you could win tickets to the German Grand Prix.



Get The Independent on Wednesday 26 or Thursday 27 June for details on how to register.

DREAM TEAM CANADIAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to Tim Kerr, from Bangor, County Down and his team Hit & Run. He has won a day out testing with the Tyrrell Formula One team at Silverstone.

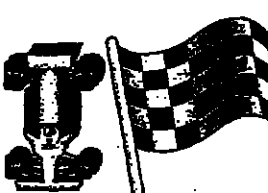
Overall Top 50 Dream Teams

Fifty teams are in joint 1st position with 361 points

- 1 The 7 Percenters
- 1 Follow Me Please Racing
- 1 Drack
- 1 Hill's Decline
- 1 Stagnant 3
- 1 Smith's Sizzlers
- 1 Emily Zoom
- 1 Track Suit Racing UK
- 1 Eagle Racing
- 1 Skidliids
- 1 Team Shambles
- 1 Overdrive
- 1 Diesel Dreamers
- 1 Vernotti Racing
- 1 Cockney Racers

- 1 Rice F1
- 1 Bryan's Bullets
- 1 Jack Burchell Ford
- 1 Inglis Team
- 1 Sicot Racing
- 1 Team Muttley
- 1 Nathan
- 1 Suths
- 1 Ollie's Team
- 1 Charlton Lamb
- 1 Dave's Drivers
- 1 Team Milne
- 1 Go Willit Go
- 1 Sandow 2
- 1 Piston Broke 2
- 1 The 85 Bears
- 1 Girdlers Grid Stars
- 1 The Dukes of Hazzod
- 1 Mystic Murray's F1
- 1 Phoenix Racing

- 1 PJB Racetec
- 1 Micro Power
- 1 Wilkys
- 1 Hilliams
- 1 Orkney F1 GP
- 1 Ruddocks Racers
- 1 Ascending Mode Alfa
- 1 JTF 1
- 1 Aphex Twin Carbs
- 1 Larkeys Magic
- 1 Palace GP
- 1 Brixton 1
- 1 Leading Lights
- 1 Scott One
- 1 Inter-Netty Norton



Join over 25,000 readers who are playing Formula 1 Dream Team

سكيا في الامم

Bijou D'Inde has the final word

RICHARD EDMONDSON
reports from Royal Ascot

For those who had been told a French horse would collect the St James's Palace Stakes yesterday the morning results section must have a reassuring look. Bijou D'Inde was the winner. The colt's connections are not exactly Gallic, however, as he is owned and trained by Scotsmen and when he breathes in after exercise each morning it is great gulps of North Yorkshire air which are taken into the bellows.

This was the Group One race that was billed as the showdown between the Guineas winners. Mark Of Esteem had won the Newmarket version and was running for the home side (despite carrying no British connection), while Ashkanani and Spinning World had captured the French and Irish equivalents for Chantilly and were thought to have it between them. Bijou D'Inde had lost in two of the Guineas and was considered little more than a member of the cast.

This lowly place in the production looked reasonable enough as the gawky chestnut set off in front, a figure to be shot at. As the Ascot bell tolled it seemed to signal his chances. Ashkanani sweeping by with ease. But then Bijou D'Inde jumped outside his pit part. Jason Weaver galvanised his mount to a serious reply up the rails and when the post arrived he was a head back in front.

Mark Johnston, the colt's trainer, supplied a military metaphor for all this, suggesting, in Corporal Jones style, that the French did not like it up them. It was not difficult to imagine the Middleham trainer as a nationalist as he disported himself in a waistcoat and tie of his family tartan.

Johnston admitted that when Bijou D'Inde first arrived at Kingsley House he was tempted to put him straight back in the crate and thump in some nails.

"There were stages last year when I would have given him back if I could," he said. "But the first day he stepped on to the gallops he was very, very good."

This was the first time this year the terrain had been in Bijou D'Inde's favour. At Newmarket the dip had the same effect on him as the frozen lake on new-born Bambi, while the Curragh was too soft. Now the agenda includes the Eclipse Stakes and, later on, the Breeders' Cup Mile as Johnston's quest is to establish himself as a trainer of global capacity.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Blomberg
(Royal Ascot 4.20)
NB: Naked Welcome
(Royal Ascot 5.30)

The opening mile race, the Queen Anne Stakes, provided an even more impressive winner in the shape of Charnwood Forest, who succeeded despite taking the course of a warped arrow up the straight. "He just hung a bit with me today and it took me a while to get him organised," Michael Kianine, the winning rider, reported. "But I did think he was a good thing."

The winner has a busy schedule ahead including the Sussex Stakes, Prix Jacques Le Marois, Queen Elizabeth II Stakes and, possibly, the Breeders' Cup Mile. By winter he may have a rep's mileage.

The Prince Of Wales's Stakes maintained the staggering posthumous success of the Moller brothers, who bequeathed funds to keep their chocolate and brown colours alive. Pentire carries the flag and yesterday First Island proved he is no Blackpool sands performer either. He broke the track record.

The winner was partnered by Michael Hills, who switched into Cain and Abel mode when he passed his twin brother, Richard. In the straight, flicking his brother's mount, Montygo, across the snout with his whip as he surged through to success.



Bijou D'Inde (left) rallies to repel the favourite, Ashkanani (sheepskin noseband), in yesterday's St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Stone Ridge heading straight for success

GREG WOOD

Last year's Royal Hunt Cup provided one of those rare (to be honest, almost unique) occasions when a big handicap unfolded entirely as predicted, as Chickawicka cut out the running from stall 31 to give the far side a crucial advantage, and set the race up for Realities.

Bitter experience tells us that our chance of a repeat performance today is slightly smaller than that of the Princess of Wales arriving in the Queen's carriage. None the less, it seems reasonable to adopt the same initial approach to the Hunt Cup, the biggest betting race of the week, and attempt to find the early pace which always favours one side or the other.

This year, it is a case of the same horse, but the other side. Once again, Chickawicka seems sure to make the running, but

is drawn seven, and with another probable front-runner, Ger's Royale, also on the stands' side, there seems no reason to look beyond stall 15 for the winner.

It is also worth recording that Nick Cheyne, Ascot's clerk of the course, commented yesterday that despite the new full-cover watering system, he expects the stands' side to be "slightly favoured" as the meeting progresses.

This immediately excludes

such well-supported horses as Blomberg and New Century, and when those with no obvious chance on form are discarded, the short-list is very short.

Yeast, the ante-post favourite, has an outstanding chance from stall three, but at such relatively short odds it is a serious concern that his stamina may not stretch to a fast-run straight mile on one of Britain's most demanding tracks. He is worth a small saving bet on the off-

chance that it will, but a much more interesting proposition is STONE RIDGE (nap 4.20).

The Lincoln winner is back on a straight track for the first time since Doncaster, and while his success there came on very soft ground, he also has plenty of form on a fast surface. From stall nine and with Pat Eddery holding the reins, he has an outstanding chance, and the 25-1 available with Coral and William Hill this morning will

surely be the best value bet of the week.

Revenge is the tantalising undercurrent to today's Group One event, the Coronation Stakes, as Ed Dunlop's Ta Rib attempts to confirm Poule d'Essai des Pouliches (French 1,000 Guineas) form with Shako The Yoke, trained by Elie Lellouche. Shako The Yoke was beaten by three-quarters of a length at Longchamp, but received one of the poorest rides that will be

seen anywhere in Europe this season from Dominique Boeuf.

As a result, Shako The Yoke (2.30) has a new partner in Olivier Peslier, whose superb ride on Glory Of Dancer in the Derby was surely one of the finest Espion debuts we have seen. He did not receive the credit he deserved from commentators more used to criticising French jockeys, but that oversight can be corrected today. Almshtarak (2.30) is an interesting outsider for the Jersey Stakes. He was beaten by Ramozz at Epsom last time, but Gay Kellaway, his trainer, points out that "there was no pace that day, and when he gets a good pace he will be a very, very good horse."

More Silver (3.05) and Shergar (4.55) are other likely winners, though not all tempt odds. Save cash for Rembrandt Sun (next best 5.30), another who will enjoy the fierce pace.

THE ROYAL HUNT CUP - 10-YEAR TALE

Year	Winner	Trainer	Jockey	Time
1977	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1978	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1979	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1980	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1981	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1982	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1983	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1984	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1985	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1986	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1
1987	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills	1:32.1

ROYAL ASCOT

Time	Event	Winner	Trainer	Jockey
2.30	Ramozz	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
3.05	More Silver	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
3.45	Shako The Yoke (nb)	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
4.20	Yeast	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
4.55	Backstop	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
5.30	SON OF SHARP SHOT (nap)	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills



but, Moonshine Girl and Dancing Drop were separated by a short-head at Sandown, again in a fast time, and look the dangers.

3.45: SHAKO THE YOKO, who had all kinds of trouble in running and was a most unlucky loser when finishing three-quarters of a length second to Ta Rib in the Poule d'Essai des Pouliches (French 1,000 Guineas) at Longchamp, had previously stormed home by 10 lengths in the Prix de la Grotte over the same course and distance. Proven on today's lightning fast ground, she will be hard to beat. Last Second is an interesting outsider.

4.20: YEAST, not disgraced in going down by a short-head to Almshtarak in a recent Limited Stakes at Lingfield, had previously shown he has what it takes to land a big handicap when taking the Victoria Cup over seven furlongs here in April. Dangers include Tertium, runner up to Ela-Aristokrati in a competitive handicap at Epsom on Derby day, and the progressive Blomberg, winner of the Diomed Stakes at Epsom on Oaks day.

Moments of Fortune.

40/1 says you're due one at Royal Ascot.

ROYAL HUNT CUP
1m. Handicap, Royal Ascot 4.20pm. Live on BBC.

9/1 Yeast	25/1 Moving Arrow
12/1 Silvan Bliss	33/1 Cadeaux Tyrst
14/1 Akil	33/1 Czarna
14/1 Behaviour	33/1 Gymcrack Premiere
14/1 Blomberg	33/1 Green Green Desert
14/1 Kaywee	33/1 Star Talent
14/1 Tartum	33/1 Star Talent
16/1 Beauchamp Jazz	40/1 Moments of Fort.
16/1 New Century	40/1 Moments of Fort.
16/1 Tarawa	40/1 Star Manager
18/1 Serious	40/1 Wild Rice
20/1 Amrak Aleeb	40/1 Zygo
20/1 Crumpton Hill	50/1 Blaze of song
20/1 Donna Viola	50/1 Mo-Addab
20/1 Stone Ridge	100/1 Chickawicka
25/1 Ger's Royale	100/1 Cedez Le Passage

EW one-quarter the odds a place 1.3.3.4.
These prices may change slightly due to late betting. For the latest prices, see the betting section on page 10.

Live Royal Ascot commentary 0891 222 101

FOR INSTANT BETTING FROM 9 O'CLOCK, FREEPHONE 0800 524 524

*Not legal in Scotland. 18+ only. Ladbrokes telephone betting only. 0800 524 524. Ladbrokes only. Ladbrokes only. Ladbrokes only.

Ladbrokes
For a bet, Ladbrokes are favourite.

ROYAL ASCOT

Time	Event	Winner	Trainer	Jockey
2.30	Ramozz	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
3.05	More Silver	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
3.45	Shako The Yoke (nb)	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
4.20	Yeast	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
4.55	Backstop	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills
5.30	SON OF SHARP SHOT (nap)	Chickawicka	Johnstone	Michael Hills

2.30 JERSEY STAKES (CLASS A) (Group 3) £50,000 added 3YO 7f Penalty Value £34,400

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Heroes and villains: England's players and supporters celebrate after the Scotland captain and No 10 Gary McAllister's second-half performance in the crucial Group A clash at Wembley Saturday (top). Just 60 seconds later, McAllister's anguish is multiplied as England's mercurial midfielder Paul Gascoigne soaks up the sun-drenched Wembley crowd following his superb solo goal (below). Photographs: Dave of the



Did you guess our hidden personality?

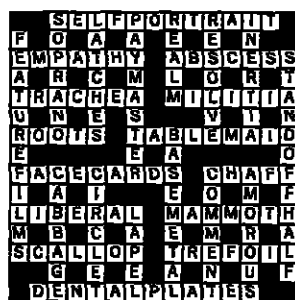
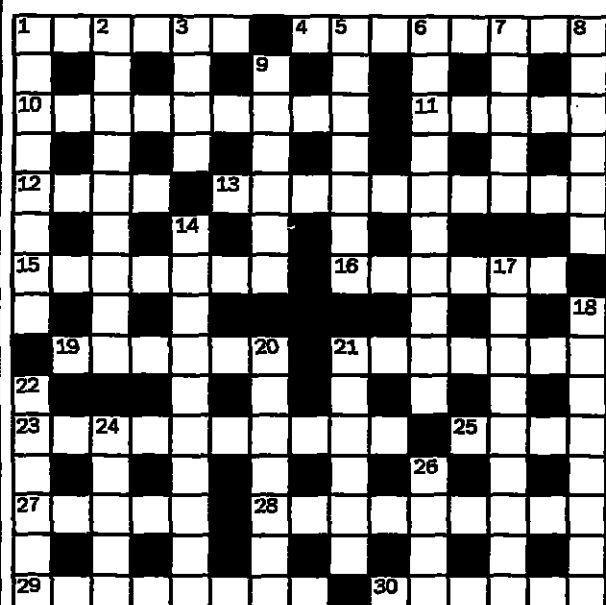
The 24-year-old who likes to let off steam riding Harley-Davidsons and shouting at footballers – but never her favourite Gary Lineker, who played for her local side, Barcelona – is Conchita Martínez. She became a national hero two years ago when she became the first Spanish woman to win Wimbledon. She is seeded No 3 in this year's All England Championships.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3017, Wednesday 19 June

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



ACROSS

- 1 Spill crack of the highest quality (6)
4 Cross-grained stump of tree delivered (8)
10 Recumbent sort suffering heat-burns (9)
11 Grant taking a Washington road? (5)
12 Response from the choir (4)

- 25 Maximum temperature in freezer, ordinarily (4)
27 Plant in neat border (5)
28 The wind, said Pepsy, is all over the place (9)
29 How to devalue the sovereign? (9)
30 Drink permitted in Swiss Cottage (6)

DOWN

- 13 Trouble with apple-trees can be brief and unimportant (4-6)
15 Unvarying, even in costume dress (7)
16 Troy edition of paper (6)
19 Fields of study with authentic manuscript (6)
21 Fence complaining bitterly (7)
23 Myrtle to marry, knot to be tied (5-5)

- 1 Aesthetically pleasing flutes at dance (8)
2 Point of story delivered with cordial manner (9)
3 But one can make square cuts in it (4)
5 Anguish of guys in the wrong (7)
6 Pile bashed about in a Dickensian office (10)
7 Nothing to report of what was passed in Japan (5)

- 8 Urtidy form of Adamitism (6)
9 Belief in existence of gods is in people addressed (6)
14 Last defender in battle at Stamford Bridge? (10)
17 Sort of coupling that is all-embracing (9)
18 In the blissful state of a gnome? (8)
20 Down south in new town in Wiltshire (7)
21 Holiday in a bay (6)
22 Road repaired around cricket club for match (6)
24 Solemn-looking young thing in barn, possibly (5)
26 Third man to opening pair (4)



Oh, he's bent it.



Spice up your snack life.

صحن من الامل